The SHU:SH Project

Slurs Hurt Us: Safety and Health -

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students at School

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California at Berkeley

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Fall 2013

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Abstract

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Teachers can be one of the most powerful factors in creating a safer school culture through intervening when they hear lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) slurs (Bockenek and Brown, 2001; Kosciw et al., 2009). Teachers are the primary adult contact students have throughout their school day, and many teachers hear gay slurs in the classroom and do not intervene. My design study focuses on creating a school culture where teachers intervene when they hear students using LGBT slurs in the classroom or on campus. This study does not focus on attempting to shift the entire school culture within the duration of the design study process but rather begin to acknowledge the critical LGBT issues on campus by addressing gay slurs. This design study is the beginning of a larger school culture change process.

The SHU:SH Project Slurs Hurt Us: Safety and Health - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students at School, a mixed-method study combining qualitative and quantitative methods, begins with identifying the problem of practice: students and teachers hear LGBT slurs on a daily basis in the classroom and hallways. What is problematic about this behavior is that teachers ignore these slurs, tolerate them, and do not intervene when they hear slurs. For this study, I developed a theory of action to guide the design. Drawing from the literature, I identified five key design elements in creating a professional development process by which a school culture is created to enable teachers and staff to intervene when they hear LGBT slurs on campus: create cognitive dissonance and awareness, develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization, acknowledge depth of problem and deepen insight, engage in inquiry cycle while creating action space, and efficacy.

Overall, I found the unpredictability of difficult, volatile, and complex human interactions around social status requires enormously capable leaders (Theoharis, 2007). The local context of silence pervasive in this social justice high school embodied the complexity of addressing slurs. My hope is the next design iteration will focus on self-critical inquiry for social justice leaders, examine the local context of silence, and analyze the effective implementation of theory to practice within social justice initiatives.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth around the world. You are heard. You are seen. You are loved.

The SHU:SH Project Slurs Hurt Us: Safety and Health - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students at School

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation happened because of the support of my advisor, wife and colleagues. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Heinrich Mintrop for your constant support, attention, and guidance. By demanding I break free from my traditional mind-set you helped propel me into a conceptual thinker and leader. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Patricia Baquedano-López and Robert MacCoun, who provided excellent support within their respective areas of expertise and many hours outside of their committee duties to ensure my project developed successfully. Thank you Xiaoxia Newton for not only serving as my orals examination committee chair but also working with me each step of the way on developing my design methodology. Finally, thank you to Mary Banach who assisted me in the statistical data analysis volunteering her time outside of the classroom to make my numbers come to life.

I offer my continuous gratitude and love to my wife, Jessica Strauss. With your unconditional love and support, I was physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually able to complete this project. You give so much so I may pursue my dreams, always. Thank you.

I am appreciative of the time and energy of the participating teachers and staff in this study while I served as principal. You reminded me every day why we serve and support our students in all the ways that we do. I am humbled and privileged to have served our community together through the social justice lens.

The Leadership for Educational Equity Program (LEEP) at UC-Berkeley is a cohort program, and I would not have finished this doctorate without the support of my LEEP instructors and colleagues. Thank you to the many engaging and challenging professors who teach in the LEEP program. LEEP alumni Matt Wayne and Page Tompkins not only are you fantastic lecturers but also outstanding practical guides through the LEEP doctoral process. I especially appreciate the support of John Hall. Whether it was gathering resources for my literature base, reviewing countless paragraphs, explaining *dedoose*, or assisting me in my final hour of dissertation filing, you were always there when I reached out for assistance. I am grateful for the feedback, friendship, and camaraderie of my LEEP 4 cohort members, Gary Mukai, Brent Daniels, Liz Baham, and Annie Johnston. Knowing that you were also working full-time, managing your personal lives, and earning a doctorate simultaneously provided me comfort and encouragement to always make progress.

Finally, thank you, Mazzy, for taking care of our family. You are a good dog.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Many educational leaders understand the imperative for safe school environments and strive to establish respect for all members of their school communities (Little, 2001).[1] However, rarely do issues of a student's sexual orientation surface in this school safety context. How students identify themselves regarding sexual orientation can result in a breach of physical, emotional, or psychological safety at school (Biddulph, 2006; Sears, 1991; Telljohann and Price, 1993; Uribe and Harbeck, 1991). For a student, *coming out,* or acknowledging one's identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), sometimes results in violence and sexual harassment (Kosciw, Gretak, Diaz, and Bartkiewicz, 2009).[2] Even if a student does not self-identify as LGBT, the perception of sexual orientation, gender, or gender expression as LGBT can cause him or her to be harmed (Kosciw et al., 2009). Some LGBT students skip school because of safety concerns over sexual orientation and report experiencing more harassment than their straight counterparts. In addition, LGBT students who have been harassed due to sexual orientation have significantly lower grade point averages, are more likely to be pushed out of school, and exhibit fewer pro-social behaviors (Kosciw et al., 2009).

As a cultural norm, U.S. public schools are supposed to embody inclusiveness, as reflected in equal access, equal opportunity, the celebrating of similarities, and the respecting of differences (Biegel, 2010). However, frequently what schools intend to do and what schools do is incongruous. In 2001, only four states had enacted laws that explicitly prohibit harassment of gay and lesbian students; California was only one of 10 states that protect students from bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation (Bockenek and Brown, 2001). Now, in 2013, there are 16 states that have enacted laws that explicitly prohibit harassment of gay and lesbian students and 14 states that protect students from bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation (GLSEN, 2013).

Educational leaders and teachers are usually the persons responsible for providing a safe learning environment for students and are often designated to ensure that safety. Yet, these leaders have little guidance about how to support LGBT students. Although LGBT students are often members of culturally diverse communities, rarely are LGBT issues addressed within school leadership preparedness programs (Boske and Jones-Redmond, 2007). In fact, there are only a few studies that directly address school leadership and the issue of sexual orientation in schools; none of them offer recommendations for educational leader preparation (Capper et. al 2006). When educational leaders do not acknowledge LGBT students and LGBT issues in school conversations, they are excluding LGBT students specifically and denying their existence (Blumenfeld, 1992).

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[1] I define educational leader as adults in the school system as leaders who have been self-selected or appointed to carry out a specific task in improving our education system.

[2] This paper uses the acronym most typically employed by those addressing LGBT issues at this point in time: LGBT (referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender). Other acronyms and a range of terms are in use and definitions can vary considerably.

Educational leaders typically do not consider LGBT as a part of conversations about school safety even though these leaders increasingly face LGBT issues in schools (Szalacha, 2004). In fact, some educational leaders may not even see LGBT issues as a part of their concern for the greater student population. Educational leaders lack capacity, knowledge and growth opportunities to explore how to orient and support themselves as leaders as well as their staff regarding LGBT issues (Warwick et al., 2004). This contrasts with the finding that having a supportive educational leader is critical to changing school culture (Markow and Dancewicz, 2008).

LGBT School Context: Bullying and Harassment

Why should a school leader care about LGBT students? LGBT people exist on every school campus in every classroom (Biegel, 2010). Approximately 5% of America's high school students identify as lesbian or gay or roughly three-quarters of a million students nationwide; this translates to every classroom in America having at least one student who identifies as lesbian or gay (Kosciw et al., 2009). The fact that LGBT students are enrolled in schools may create an educational leader's interest in these students' safety and academic performance even though LGBT students are not an officially documented part of the school community.

Focusing on LGBT school safety is particularly important because there is a strong connection between school safety and LGBT student academic performance (Biegel, 2010; Kosciw et al., 2009). An unsafe school environment affects students' learning, their educational attainment through high school, and therefore, college entrance accessibility (Kosciw et al., 2009). Bullying and harassment keeps countless youth from feeling safe in schools and hence thwarts access to learning (Lieberman and Cowan, 2011). Many LGBT students spend an inordinate amount of energy plotting how to get safely to and from school, how to avoid the hallways when other students are present so they can avoid slurs and shoves, and how to cut gym class to escape being beaten up, in short, how to become invisible so they will not be verbally and physically attacked (Bockenek and Brown, 2001). According to the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) 2009 National School Climate Survey of 7,261 middle and high school students in the United States, nearly nine out of ten LGBT students experienced harassment at school in one year and nearly two-thirds felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation. As a result, these students tend to miss class time affecting their academic performance. One of the top three reasons most students say their peers are harassed in school is actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2009). In *Shared Differences,* a U.S. study of over 2,000 LGBT students of color that used individual and group interviews as its data source, researchers found that LGBT students of color are much more likely to feel unsafe and experience harassment because of their race or ethnicity than those who were in the racial or ethnic majority (Diaz and Kosciw, 2009). In addition, sexual orientation and gender expression were the most common reasons LGBT students of color reported feeling unsafe in school; more than four out of five students reported verbal harassment in school because of sexual orientation and about two-thirds because of gender expression (Diaz and Kosciw, 2009). In brief, there are several obstacles that many LGBT students face while attempting to access their education.

LGBT students are not only struggling to survive within the school environment but once they leave school walking home. LGBT youth comprise a significant percentage

of the homeless youth population (Kruks, 1991; Whitbeck et al., 2004). Compared to heterosexual homeless youth, LGBT homeless youth leave home more frequently and are exposed to greater victimization while on the streets (Cochran et al., 2007). LGBT youth may be at particular risk for homelessness due to conflict with their family regarding their sexual orientation (Milburn et al., 2006). In addition, these youth may experience more physical and sexual abuse from caretakers (Whitbeck et al., 2004).

LGBT School Context: Slurs

In my extensive experience as a student, teacher and administrator, the following are the most common slurs in secondary schools: *faggot, homo, no homo, that's so gay, gay, lesbo*, *nigga*, and *bitch*. A slur is any offensive, insulting remark or comment that is meant to ridicule someone based on their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, or class (Gay Straight Alliance Network, 2012). Gay slurs are pervasive in our schools. They are extremely indicative of the deep school culture of stigmatizing LGBT issues. These slurs are often ignored, tolerated and not directly addressed by teachers, administrators, and staff. In my design, I conceptualize slurs as having unique properties that are symbolic ways to do harm. Many times, these slurs, such as *faggot* are not directed at LGBT students (Pascoe, 2005). This is to say that slurs go beyond just harming LGBT students; they harm all students.

LGBT slurs are frequent and a daily occurrence in our schools. These words cause damage every day for LGBT students. In an extensive, national school survey, 85% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed with 72% of LGBT reported hearing homophobic remarks such as *faggot* or *dyke* frequently or often at school (Kosciw et. al, 2009). In hearing these remarks, increased levels of victimization were related to levels of depression, anxiety, and decreased levels of self-esteem for these LGBT students. Considering the fact that LGBT students may already experience negative repercussions when coming out, these slurs contribute negatively and significantly to psychological wellbeing.

Yet, to describe these slurs as stemming from simple homophobia is not complete. Homophobia is too facile a term with which to describe the use of *fag* as an epithet; to invoke homophobia is to describe the ways in which boys aggressively tease each other overlooks the powerful relationship between masculinity and this type of insult (Pascoe, 2005). Examining the relationship between masculinity and slurs may lead to more effective school LGBT slur interventions. However, LGBT slur awareness initiatives in a school setting can sometimes be silencing for LGBT students (Woolley, 2012). Similarly, LGBT student support groups can be excluding of LGBT students of color (McCready, 2003). My design study attempts to venture beyond conventional means of examining the slur problem.

Design Challenge

Teachers can be one of the most powerful factors in creating a safer school culture through stopping LGBT slurs (Bockenek and Brown, 2001; Kosciw et al., 2009). Also, teachers are the primary adult contact students have throughout their school day and many teachers hear gay slurs in the classroom and do not intervene. My design study focuses on creating a school culture where teachers intervene when they hear students using LGBT slurs in the classroom. This study does not focus on attempting to shift the entire school culture within the duration of the design study process but rather begin to

acknowledge the critical LGBT issues on campus by addressing gay slurs. This design study is the beginning of a larger school culture change process.

My design study begins with identifying the problem of practice: students and teachers hear LGBT slurs on a daily basis in the classroom and hallways. What is problematic about this behavior is that teachers ignore these slurs, tolerate them, and/or do not intervene when they hear slurs. By the end of this design study, I hoped to have had a higher frequency of teachers intervening when slurs occur in their classrooms (Table 1).

Table 1: Design Study Overview

Problem of Practice	Students and teachers hear LGBT slurs on a daily basis at school in classrooms and hallways.
Defining Problematic Behavior	Teachers ignore slurs, tolerate slurs, and do not intervene when they hear slurs.
Defining Desired State or Outcome	Teachers intervene when they hear slurs.

I worked with a small group of committed teachers, staff and administrators, who are the leadership team (Team), to design and prepare a series of LGBT-focused activities that were specifically created to address LGBT slurs on campus. The Team consisted of three teachers, two staff members, and two administrators. This Team then brought these LGBT activities series to the greater faculty. My unit of treatment for this study is the faculty. I did not focus on specific teachers in the Team nor specific teachers in the greater faculty for outcomes but rather the faculty as a whole in order to see how the Team's work affected school culture change by reducing LGBT slurs on campus. This design study was particularly challenging as I attempted to reach the deeper layers of teachers' norms and values.

Defining Problematic Behavior

Homophobic slurs are most common at my research site as is reflected in nation wide trends (Kosciw et al., 2009). Yet, these slurs are mostly tolerated and ignored by teachers on campus. However, teachers can typically be categorized into a group of people known for having a willingness to assist students in need. This may be true in the case of assisting LGBT students, too. Because I am an *out educator* who identifies as LGBT, over the past twelve years various teachers have approached me in seeking advice on how to help LGBT students or how to respond to hearing LGBT slurs in their classroom and hallways, yet slurs still continued at these schools. Therefore, when it comes to actually knowing how to provide an appropriate slur intervention for teachers, many of these teachers are willing to help but may lack the knowledge, training or implementation expertise to successfully assist their students. A teacher may, as stated above, have a genuine desire to intervene when hearing a LGBT slur in her classroom or hallway but does not know what policies and laws she should be following and how to implement them. Slurs hurt, are rampant, but they are widely tolerated or ignored by teachers despite policies and laws that protect LGBT students.

Defining Desired State or Outcome

My design challenge was created to determine how to involve teachers at one high school to begin to change the LGBT school culture by shifting away from a school that tolerates homophobic slurs to a school where teachers are actively intervening when slurs occur. The process I designed, in cooperation with the Team, began this change in school culture. Specifically, the design study was created to increase the frequency of pro-active intervention when slurs occurred and as a result decrease LGBT slur frequency on campus.

Local Context

This design study took place in an urban California social justice themed public, independent charter high school in the Los Angeles area called Learning High School (LHS). Many of the schools in this charter school's vicinity are a part of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). LAUSD is one of the most progressive school districts in the United States that has mandated safe campuses for LGBT students. Founded in 1984, Project 10 is still now a thriving LAUSD program that provides education and support services to campuses and for LGBT students. It continues to provide ongoing trainings for principals, teachers, and other school staff on issues of homophobia and advocacy for LGBT students. LAUSD secondary school principals receive mandated trainings on equitable treatment of LGBT students and the LAUSD requires health text for high school students which contains an entire chapter on sexual orientation and gender identity (Chiasson, 2006).

Unfortunately, in 2004, LGBT harassment and disregard to these District instructions persisted, as indicated by the situation at one LAUSD high school. This school's failure to comply with District policies protecting LGBT students ultimately resulted in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union in conjunction with the National Center for Lesbian Rights (ACLU, 2004). The complaint lodged sixteen allegations on behalf of three plaintiffs. Included in the allegations were charges that a teacher allowed a presumed gay student to be beaten in class by other students on the grounds that the assaulted student *needed to toughen up*, that the school police taunted presumed gay students with anti-gay comments, and that a teacher informed a student's parents that their daughter was a lesbian and should turn to Jesus to avoid certain *damnation* (ACLU, 2004; Chiasson, 2006). Settling out of court, LAUSD agreed to provide mandatory LGBT sensitivity trainings to all students and staff at the offending high school and its three feeder middle schools for three consecutive years. This is to say that even in the most progressive districts in the country, LGBT harassment persists.

Conclusion

Bullying and harassment thwart learning for many LGBT students. Although there are many obstacles for LGBT students accessing education, evidence from high impact strategies have helped me think about design principles that motivate groups of willing but uncertain or complacent school leaders to develop their transformative potential for the school as a whole. Four pertinent high impact strategies that appear in the literature to improve LGBT school culture are inclusive LGBT school policies, supportive adults, LGBT safe spaces, and LGBT professional development. For my design challenge, I have drawn from these high impact strategies to begin to change a

school's LGBT culture towards a more inclusive LGBT campus. My intention in my design study was to create an intervention for educational leaders and faculty that provokes an increased acknowledgement of the severity of LGBT issues, creates an adult willingness to intervene when anti-LGBT behavior occurs between students, and engages educational leaders and faculty in thoughtful LGBT conversations regarding slurs. In this next chapter, I discuss these high impact strategies that emerge from the research and professional knowledge base.

CHAPTER TWO:
CONSULTING THE RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE

Introduction

In consulting the professional knowledge base on LGBT issues in schools, I reviewed selected topics that may inform my design study. I consulted various LGBT safe schools studies, the literature on reculturing for equity, and the literature on transformational leadership. The LGBT safe schools literature helped me understand the current context and experience of LGBT students in schools and some strategies that improve on their situation. The literature on reculturing for equity and school change helped me understand the complexities of moving a school forward towards a more inclusive LGBT campus. Finally, I looked to school change leadership literature to understand how a school leader could assist a school in moving towards a more social justice minded learning environment that allows teachers to intervene when hearing LGBT slurs in the classroom.

Although I have not utilized all of the information this literature suggests, I have used several strategies it suggests to create a safer LGBT campus by targeting LGBT slurs. The principle literature themes I researched are the following: inclusive LGBT school policies; supportive adults for LGBT students; LGBT safe spaces; LGBT professional development on inclusive practices; addressing teachers' norms, beliefs, and values; and moral leadership and addressing school culture. To conclude, I shift from specific activities and interventions in my LGBT professional development series to the process with which Learning High School (LHS) may culturally change through addressing norms, beliefs and values of a school.

Improving the Context:
High Impact Strategies for an Inclusive LGBT School Culture

As previously noted, educational leaders typically do not receive adequate training and guidance in how to create a safer school culture for LGBT students. Although many obstacles exist for LGBT students, the literature indicates several strategies that might decrease these challenges and contribute to a supportive LGBT school culture. In this next section, I describe four pertinent high impact strategies that promote LGBT school safety for the purpose of gleaning key concepts for an intervention that helps school leaders to become pro-active in changing the culture of their school. I first identify policies that seem to have contributed to LGBT student safety. I then focus on the role of supportive adults in schools as a means to improving the educational experiences of LGBT students. Thirdly, I discuss the importance of school safe spaces for LGBT students to convene and discuss issues pertinent to the LGBT community. And, finally, I discuss the role professional development in changing the norms, values, and beliefs of school educational leaders.

Inclusive LGBT School Policies

Inclusive LGBT school policies can create a safer place for LGBT students (Biegel and Kuehl, 2010) and reduce anti-LGBT activity such as homophobic remarks and verbal harassment (Mayberry, 2006; Szalacha, 2004). The knowledge of such existing school policies can support youth (Kosciw et al., 2009; Ouellett, 2002). Although few schools

have implemented school wide policies and programs aimed at transforming anti-gay issues at school (Mayberry, 2006), LGBT students who are aware of an inclusive LGBT policy are more likely to report incidences of violence, bullying and harassment than if they were unaware of the existence of such policies (Kosciw et al., 2009). These policies, as communicated or not by teachers and staff, have the potential to be extremely influential positively or negatively in the lives of young people (Biddulph, 2006; Warwick et al., 2004). For example, if a policy is supportive of LGBT issues and there is a clear consequence for violating this policy, this policy can affect LGBT students positively (Biddulph, 2006). On the other hand, if LGBT policies are ignored, legally, many LGBT individuals or groups bear heavy consequences (Nabozny v. Podlesny, 2005).[3] Vreeman and Carroll (2007) examined findings of 26 studies evaluating anti-bullying policies. They found that a major success factor of the anti-bullying programs included school wide policies against bullying and specific consequences for infractions of these rules. Clear consequences for school personnel who do not intervene when witnessing LGBT harassment or homophobic remarks as well as having anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that explicitly protect LGBT students can improve school safety for LGBT students (Markow and Dancewicz, 2008). In sum, the knowledge and existence of LGBT inclusive policies can positively supportive LGBT students. And, having supportive policies on the books, creating awareness of these policies in the school, visibly enforcing these policies, and having leaders committed to them makes a positive difference for LGBT students.

Supportive Adults for LGBT Students

Equally important to creating and supporting LGBT inclusive school policies are having supportive adults in the school system that supports LGBT students. This supportive adult is critical to LGBT students surviving the otherwise hostile atmosphere (Kosciw et al., 2009). Bockenek and Brown (2001) interviewed 140 youth between the ages of twelve and twenty-one as well as 130 adults regarding feeling safe at school. These researchers developed questions in collaboration with other researchers and attorneys. They considered ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic status of the subjects. Students reported that small things, such as a few words of acknowledgment, a gesture, or the tone of a teacher's voice, were immensely helpful to them (Bockenek and Brown, 2001). On the same note, examining the Massachusetts Safe Program, Ouellett and Griffin (1993) found that every safe school had at least one adult, whether a teacher,

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[3] In *Nabozny v. Podlesny*, 92 F.3d 446 (7th Cir.1996), Jamie Nabozny, a self-identified gay boy, was continuously harassed and physically abused by students because he was gay. Although the Ashland Public School District where Nabozny attended school had a policy of investigating and punishing student-on-student battery and sexual harassment, they somehow ignored Nabozny's requests to investigate. Much evidence suggests that some of the administrators themselves mocked Nabozny's predicament (Biegel, 2010). Nabozny was to show that the defendants acted either intentionally or with deliberate indifference. The district found that Nabozny did not have evidence to support his claim and granted the defendants qualified immunity. Seven jurors unanimously voted to hold Nabozny's school principals accountable for ignoring the four years of brutal anti-gay abuse he suffered at the hands of his classmates (Russo, 2006).

counselor, school nurse, or librarian, whom students and principals perceived as trustworthy and credible, was an active leader in changing the school's policies.[4] This adult was not always LGBT and was not necessarily knowledgeable about LGBT issues, but the person was willing to act as an advocate for LGBT students with other adults and students in the school (Ouellett and Griffin, 2002). In addition, this analysis examined the supportive adult bridging communication between students and others in the school (Ouellett and Griffin, 2002). Similarly, in cases where the supportive adult is openly LGBT, she or he can serve as positive role model to create a climate of support and acceptance (Van Wormer, 2003). Given that one adult makes such a difference, recruiting supportive adults at any given school can be a high-impact strategy for improving the LGBT school culture. Creating an initiative that shores up the collective commitment of a group of supportive leaders whose activities radiate to other adults in the school seems a very promising strategy in light of this evidence.

LGBT Safe Spaces

The literature on *safe spaces* hints at another important component of school operation and culture that a team at a supportive school could draw upon for their activities. Safe spaces are school places where students are willing and able to participate and honestly struggle with challenging issues such as sexual orientation. I define a LGBT safe place as any time LGBT students and their allies convene purposely to discuss homophobia, sexual orientation, and other LGBT issues in a safe manner that is supervised supportively by an educational leader on campus. This type of school safe space has been assumed to encourage participation and honest sharing of ideas. LGBT school reform researchers Quinlivan and Town (1999) emphasize the importance of creating places for all students to discuss sexual identities. These researchers found when alliances between LGBT and straight youth are formed, commonalities may be explored in order to destabilize anti-LGBT school cultures by creating these safe conversation places as part of a whole-school policy. In the last 14 years, Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) have formed in many schools.[5] Research has documented that these groupings can

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[4] In 1993 Massachusetts became the first state to sponsor a Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Youth (SSP), run by the Department of Education. The Massachusetts SSP provides consultation services and program development resources to schools as they take steps to become safer places for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. For example, over 140 high schools throughout the state have participated in staff training programs and sponsor Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs). In fact, the establishment and support of GSAs has become the centerpiece of the SSP in Massachusetts, and GSAs can apply for small annual grants from the DOE to subsidize their school-based activities. The SSP also sponsors statewide and regional conferences for educators, teacher educators, administrators, and students that include workshops and other presentations designed to increase the number and the success of high schools participating in the SSP (Ouellett and Griffin, 2002).

[5] A Gay-Straight Alliance, or GSA, is a student-run club, typically in a high school, which provides a safe place for students to meet, support each other, talk about issues related to sexual orientation, and work to end homophobia. (Gay Straight Alliance Network, 2011).

provide a safe environment for LGBT students and their allies to convene and discuss issues pertinent to their experience in school (Quinlivan and Town, 1999). LGBT students in schools with a GSA student led club were more likely to feel safe, attend classes, and feel like they belonged at their school more than students in schools with no such club (Biegel, 2010; Bockenek and Brown, 2001; Killman, 2007). Studying the impact of belonging to a GSA in a two-year qualitative investigation, Camille (2002) found that GSAs positively impact academic performance, school social and family relationships, comfort level with sexual orientation, development of strategies to handle assumptions of heterosexuality, sense of physical safety, increased perceived ability to contribute to society, and an enhanced sense of belonging to school community. A GSA is just one example of this type of safe place for safe conversations for LGBT and allied students typically found in a high school. However, in middle schools, safe spaces are difficult to create for any student, especially LGBT students (Killman, 2007). Safe spaces can go beyond a single student club. Project 10, as mentioned previously, is the LAUSD's program that provides education and support services for LGBT students. Founded in 1984 at Fairfax High School by teacher and counselor Dr. Virginia Uribe, Project 10 has at its core the establishment of confidential, voluntary support groups. The support groups provide a *safe zone* for discussions of *coming out* issues, school harassment, family relationships, health concerns, and self-empowerment. It is through these various safe spaces for students to discuss sexual orientation that a school culture becomes a contributing rather than detracting factor to a LGBT student's academic success (Uribe and Harbeck, 1992). Developing supportive adults towards the principles of safe spaces, even when organizational structures that accompany them are not in place, seems a useful direction for my project.

LGBT Professional Development on Inclusive Practices

By including LGBT issues into the school conversation, educational leaders may provide a safer, more inclusive environment for all students (Szalacha, 2004). One way an educational leader can incorporate LGBT issues into the school culture conversation is through professional development. Professional development plays an important role as schools and districts try to shift the culture around issues of equity (Lawrence and Tatum, 1997; McDiarmid, 1990; McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004; Sleeter, 1992). I chose to examine this research to understand how addressing LGBT issues in schools through professional development can begin to change the behaviors of the administrators, teachers, and staff on campus.

Although professional development can improve the school culture for LGBT students, results can be mixed when discussing diversity whether concerned with LGBT issues or issues of race. A weeklong case study looking at a multicultural week that was a part of the teacher-training program in the LAUSD examined how eleven teachers thought about various multicultural issues. The findings showed that after the weeklong training, there was no difference in reacting to stereotypes, and in fact, multicultural week had deleterious effects on instruction and individual reactions (McDiarmind, 1990). Lawrence and Tatum (1997) studied a two-day teacher professional development program addressing issues typically not discussed in schools. They concluded that it was important to discuss topics normally not discussed in schools. Sleeter (1992) conducted a two-year qualitative study of professional development examining how to enhance equity

by looking both at beliefs and practices in schools. Sleeter found relatively weak effects of this professional development program. She speculated that the school organization itself may have helped to reproduce inequality because the training focused on individual teachers and classroom practices and not on the collective culture of schools. Sleeter suggested that even though the teachers wanted to make changes in equity and volunteered for the study one ought to tackle broader organizational structures not just the individual. In looking at these various professional development studies, one may conclude that professional development may be a weak vehicle of positive cultural change for LGBT and other diverse students. In fact, it seems difficult to encourage or make a strong positive change. However, there is some evidence of some more powerful interventions within and outside of professional development that I take direction from for addressing my design challenge. It is important to note that these studies were conducted in the early 1990's. Arguably, there is greater multicultural sensitivity in 2013 than there was back then.

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In this next section, I focus on successful professional developments that have had an effect on conditions specifically related to LGBT issues. The previously discussed professional development literature helps me understand what type of professional development is successful and unsuccessful in schools. From looking at these cases, I will be able to use the successes in professional developments and apply them in my specific LGBT professional development design challenge. This information may help me therefore, to understand under which sorts of circumstances structures and activities a group of sympathetic but uncertain school leaders and educators may benefit from professional development.

There is an expressed desire for increasing LGBT awareness in schools from the point of view of the administration. Researchers Markow and Dancewicz (2008) surveyed and interviewed over 1,500 K-12 principals regarding LGBT issues in schools. In this study, principals emphasized the importance of professional development in efforts to reduce bullying or harassment. In fact, the majority of principals in this study reported teacher and staff professional development as being the main avenue to improving the school conditions for LGBT students (Markow and Dancewicz, 2008). In addition, principals indicated that there is an unmet need in the area of teacher training for LGBT issues specifically (Markow and Dancewicz, 2008). This demonstrates a desire among school stakeholders to address LGBT issues on campus regardless of how to deliver this professional development. But note, this could also be merely a reflection of the usual call for more training in light of an identified problem.

A historical LGBT professional development process is the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program MSSP (1993). The comprehensive professional development provides resources to schools as they take steps to become safer places for LGBT students. In 1993, the Massachusetts Board of Education enacted the MSSP Safe Schools Program for Lesbian and Gay Students to address the following four priorities: (1) develop school policies protecting gay and lesbian students from harassment, violence, and discrimination; (2) offer training to school personnel in crisis and suicide prevention; (3) support the establishment of school-based support groups for lesbian, gay, and heterosexual students such as Gay Straight Alliances; and (4) provide school-based counseling for family members of gay and lesbian students. During MSSP's

implementation process, 350 schools received 750 various types of teacher and staff professional development training on LGBT specific school issues (Lipkin, 1999). Results yielded that if a staff member had received the LGBT training, they were more likely to identify LGBT community resources and indicate that schools need ongoing training to support LGBT issues (Szalacha, 2004). After the MSSP professional development, not only did teachers and principals report hearing fewer anti-LGBT remarks but also both teachers and principals felt more supported (Szalacha, 2004). Equally important, the secondary school training component of the New York City Department of Education's *Respect for All* initiative increased staff competency in addressing bullying, name-calling and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression, and created safer school environments for LGBT students (Greytak and Kosciw, 2010). Although self-reporting may be unreliable, more than 92.2% of educators said the *Respect for All* training had caused them to do something differently in their educational practices regarding LGBT students (Greytak and Kosciw, 2010).

In conclusion, by striving to enact the four high impact strategies of inclusive policies, supportive adult, safe spaces, and LGBT professional development, educational leaders can promote a safer school environment for LGBT students. Yet, there is no question that training by itself, without transforming information and the good will of leaders into determination and ongoing commitment, that professional development will remain a weak force. Thus, in the wake of professional development, I must also address how to begin to change educational leaders' dispositions to act. In order to understand how these dispositions, actions and beliefs, can change, I turn to the research and professional literature on school reculturing as well as anti-bias and diversity education to understand this change process.

Homophobia and Heternormativity:
Addressing Teachers' Norms, Beliefs, and Values

Homophobia and heteronormativity assert themselves as dominant on school campuses across the country. This is a large issue that affects our schools and is not easy to address. The term homophobia was first coined in the 1960s to describe *the dread of being in close contact with homosexuals* (Chiasson, 2006; Fone, 2000). The word homophobia can be used broadly to describe the continuum of prejudice, that is, from discomfort or awkwardness to extreme hatred of perceived homosexuality (Chiasson, 2006). In schools there is a culture of silence regarding LGBT issues. Homophobia, homosexuality, and sexual orientation are not topics discussed or even addressed by teachers or principals. Heteronormativity is a belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality similar to sexism and racism (Jung and Smith, 1993). For example, LGBT students are transferred regularly from their home schools of residence to other schools for safety reasons; and, LGBT themed activities are limited in school because of their disruptive nature towards the learning environment (Chiasson, 2006). Next, I turn to aspects of moral leadership to understand how to overcome homophobia and heteronormativity in schools. Specifically, I look to addressing school culture in order to understand how to reduce LGBT slurs at LHS.

Moral Leadership and Addressing School Culture

In this section, I discuss the special role of moral leadership in promoting the aforementioned LGBT high impact strategies. Educational leaders have a unique role in shaping the moral culture of an organization. Organizational cultures are created and formed by leaders who make decisions in the moment. These decisions, more than anything else, reveal leaders' underlying values and commitments, especially when leaders need to mediate between conflicting goals, interests, and risk discomfort. McDonald (1996) explored how norms within a school worked with this dynamic. McDonald (1996) found that every school is governed by deep beliefs that go beyond the espoused beliefs. His research demonstrated that even when a teacher wants and says she wants to motivate students she might not actually do so. This discourse of thoughts and actions reflects what Schein (1988) illustrates as a conflict that exposes the underlying beliefs and values. McDonald (1996) found underlying beliefs, assumptions, and values in direct conflict with espoused beliefs and intentions. The dissonance between espoused beliefs and actions can occur in professional development as well as in daily action. In order for educational leaders to acknowledge the difficulty of changing school culture for LGBT inclusive practices, they must not only examine their deeper beliefs and assumptions about LGBT students but also bring to the conscious and verbalized surface the contradictions in the culture of their school that other less aware adults take for granted or keep unconscious and silenced. In fact, there has been an important development in discrimination research has been the growing body of evidence for implicit prejudice. This prejudice is unconscious and hence not fully under conscious control.

Anti-racist and Diversity Initiatives

Numerous efforts by educational leaders that have challenged the existing belief systems have been investigated within the context of anti-racist and diversity initiatives (McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004; McDiarmind, 1990; Lawrence and Tatum, 1997; Sleeter, 1992; Vreeman and Carroll, 2007). Overall these change initiatives have faced challenges in changing the underlying beliefs and assumptions of both the individuals in a school and the school culture as a whole. Culture can be thought of in terms of a pattern of assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group and is difficult to change as it consists of an accumulated set of ideas acquired through an organization's collective past (Schein, 1988). In addition to a collective past, there are deep underlying assumptions that are communal. In order to change norms, values, and belief systems in a school, many stakeholders have to agree to change in order to make a difference. Addressing these change elements may improve a school's culture (McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004; Oakes and Wells, 1997; Shields, 2004; Vreeman and Carroll, 2007). The literature makes some suggestions. First, awareness of an LGBT problem could occur by confronting administration and teachers with student voices and perhaps basic LGBT related statistics. Second, recognition of the moral and cognitive dissonance in place when schools are LGBT sympathetic in policy but LGBT apathetic in practice may be examined through what the teachers and administrators are actually doing and what they perceive they are doing. Finally, reducing fear of *the other* by creating a safe space to talk about LGBT issues and the social stigma attached to it may create a safer LGBT school culture.

Educational leaders who are willing to attempt to create a cultural change for

LGBT inclusiveness on their campuses can have a positive outcome for LGBT students (Chiasson, 2006). An educational leader can create this culture of safety when they assume a proactive role in addressing sexual identity issues (Szalacha, 2004). I work from the knowledge that educational leaders who desire a positive change for their schools will have an increased LGBT campus awareness, fewer incidents of anti-LGBT remarks and an increased number of critical incidents of pro-LGBT action by these adults. I want to challenge the underlying assumptions with these educational leaders regarding LGBT issues. I can do so by effectively engaging a school staff that is already willing but complacent in addressing the existing LGBT problem (Shields, 2004). The first intervention in working towards these desirable pro-LGBT behaviors is to create cognitive dissonance and awareness. The second intervention is to develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization. The third tier of the design is to acknowledge the depth of the problem and deepen insight. Next, teachers and staff will engage in the inquiry cycle while creating action space. And finally, my intervention enables teachers and staff to examine the efficacy of the process. By acknowledging the LGBT problems within the school structure itself, educational leaders, teachers, and staff can collectively identify the issue and have a stake in the change process in order to encourage fidelity of the implementation process (Oakes and Wells, 1997).

Conversations, Constructive Problem Talk, and Teacher Culture

Equally important to LGBT professional development, if not coexisting are ongoing LGBT related conversations about the very acknowledgement of LGBT student issues. These conversations are what some researchers and practitioners call courageous conversations (Abrams, 2009; Singleton, 2005; Palmer, 1998). Courageous conversations can assist educational leaders in replacing deficit thinking. I define courageous conversations as dialogue between two or more educational leaders and/or school faculty that exist outside of typical daily school conversation that inspire a new way of examining or approaching issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. These conversations are challenging, and some leaders avoid them altogether (Abrams, 2009). In fact, Abrams (2009) constructed a list of 18 reasons why educational leaders avoid courageous conversations. Some of these reasons include *a desire to please; I want people to like me and respect me; personal comfort; it will take so much effort to do what I need to do if this starts; perfectionism; and, I just don't have the right words yet*. Although difficult, once started, these conversations are necessary to contribute to the positive school culture shift. Courageous conversations are about being true to one's self, doing what is right for students, and shaping an environment that supports learning (Abrams, 2009).

One way in which educational leaders can overcome the resistance to these conversations is to deepen their understanding of what these conversations look like in practice. Engaging in courageous conversations is about challenging current practices and fostering improvement and growth. Through these conversations, listening to and acting upon feedback may lead to improvements in student achievement. The Ontario Leadership Strategy OLS (2009) adopted by the Ministry of Education introduced *engaging in courageous conversations* as one of its instructional leadership focal points. In practice, these educational leaders build relational trust and establish a culture in which

courageous conversations and feedback are seen as necessary for improvement, challenge assumptions at both the individual and the organizational level, and integrate description, analysis, and prediction (OLS, 2009). These courageous conversations intervention can challenge current LGBT practices and identify new ones.

Adding to reports from practitioners, there is empirical research that shows what is being done in schools when they engage in courageous conversations. In order to build communities that learn, leaders may need to challenge well-established aspects of teacher culture (Robinson et. al, 2009). Specifically for my study, I examined teacher culture that may not acknowledge or address LGBT issues. My hope was to engage teachers in *constructive problem talk* rather than avoid it (Robinson et. al., 2009). Equally important to addressing teacher culture is the educational leader's ability to inquire into the theories of action that are behind the processes they wish to change (City et. al, 2009). By looking at behaviors and beliefs behind them, educational leaders are taking time to acknowledge, discuss and understand why colleagues act as they do before suggesting alternatives (City et. al, 2009). In turn, a theory may help examine abstract ideas more deeply to produce concrete results. In sum, ongoing conversations among educational leaders can, over time, potentially assist a school in achieving the more inclusive LGBT behavior on campus.

Conclusion

Bullying and harassment thwart learning for many LGBT students. Although there are many obstacles for LGBT students accessing education, evidence from high impact strategies helped me think about design principles that motivate groups of willing but uncertain or complacent school leaders to develop their transformative potential for the school as a whole. Four pertinent high impact strategies that appear in the literature to improve LGBT school culture are inclusive LGBT school policies, supportive adults, LGBT safe spaces, and LGBT professional development. For my design challenge, I drew from these high impact strategies to begin to change a school's LGBT culture towards a more inclusive LGBT campus. I created an intervention for educational leaders and faculty that would provoke an increased acknowledgement of the severity of LGBT issues, create an adult willingness to intervene when anti-LGBT behavior occurred between students, and engage educational leaders and faculty in thoughtful LGBT conversations.

CHAPTER THREE: INTERVENTION DESIGN

Introduction

This design study engaged participants in an organizational culture change process. The leadership team and I (Team) attempted to create cognitive dissonance and awareness, develop a safe space for conversation and reduced fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization, acknowledge the depth of problem and deepened insight, engage in inquiry cycle while creating action space, and reflect on inquiry cycle and action steps. In this next section, I present my theory of action behind the proposed design study and describe in more detail the design for SHU:SH.

Theory of Action

A theory of action is a type of model or conceptualization that predicts how to move from a problematic state to a desirable one. A theory of action is more open to change and reconsideration than, for example, a conceptual model that generates firm hypotheses. However, it needs to be empirically testable in order to see whether the theory works or not or can be verified or falsified by evidence. The theory of action applies insights from the discussion of the knowledge base to the design challenge in a condensed way.

In this section, I describe the theory of action for SHU:SH (Table 2). First, I explain the causes of the problem regarding the lack of attention to LGBT slurs in schools. Next, I provide a theory of change to describe what variables are necessary in the design process to address gay slurs. My theory of change is mindful of the complex ecology of design work. It needs to proceed in three layers: the institutional and local context (e.g., homophobia and silence even in a social justice context), the core practice that needs changing (e.g., slurs) and the change dynamics that will move our school forward (e.g., moral leadership). Then, I continue with a broad description of the intervention for teachers and the minimal conditions necessary for successful implementation. I conclude with a discussion of its intended outcomes prior to implementation.

Table 2: Theory of Action

Explaining the Problem	1. Lack of educational leaders bringing issues to teachers and staff 2. Safe space needed for teachers and staff to convene and discuss issues 3. Deficit professional development repertoire 4. Homophobia and heternormativity: addressing teachers' norms, beliefs, and values 5. School culture is accepting of culture of silence regarding LGBT issues
Theory of Change and Intervention	1. Create cognitive dissonance and awareness 2. Develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization 3. Acknowledge depth of problem and deepen insight 4. Engage in inquiry cycle while creating action space 5. Efficacy

Preconditions for Implementing the Design	1. Stable school so school wide issues of management and discipline do not preclude the time and energy of teachers 2. Principal needs to be supportive of intervention 3. Selected teachers need to be interested in growing positively in the area of LGBT school issues 4. If teachers are voluntarily committed to positively improving their school LGBT culture, the LGBT protocol is more likely to be successful 5. Competence of researcher to carry out this design study

Dual Role: Rigor, Threats to Rigor, Bias

My dual role as principal/researcher is both a threat and an opportunity in this design study. Design studies by their existence are subject to challenges of rigor, threats to rigor, and bias. There exists a tension in the role division between development research (van den Akker, 1999), the potential for advocacy bias (Stake, 2006), and reactions of the participants to the presence of the researcher (Patton, 1990). In design studies, the researcher is both the design developer and the evaluator of its implementation. This tension can lead to conflict between the desire to pursue an innovation design and the need to critically seek corrections of decisions and empirical proof of outcomes (van den Akker, 1999).

This dual role was a potential threat as not only am I the researcher working with participants who are interested in the project, but also I am their superior and have authority over them from a managerial perspective. The teachers and staff had a right to not participate despite their subordinate role in the organization. It was incumbent upon me as principal/researcher to attempt to build trust and check with others for any misunderstandings. To confront this form of bias, journaling the experiences of this role duality was beneficial. Sharing findings on a regular basis with members of the Team and participants was not only useful for disconfirming bias but also helpful for building the trusting relationships that are so crucial for maximizing reflection by the participants. In addition, that I am principal could have possibly impacted both teacher and student behavior.

Yet, this dual role can also be seen as an opportunity. It is only through working together with teachers and staff that I would be able to see progress towards solving any LGBT issue on campus. I selected action research as one of my methodologies because I have thought about the potential of me, wearing two hats being the researcher and the initiator of the design, biasing the outcome of my study. Being a co-actor with the participants in the study, the action research methodology helped me combine advocacy with systematic data collection. It was important to keep advocacy biases in check by suggesting ways to collect data and reflect on the data collection process in a way that avoided bias by divorcing the researcher from the process of action. Working with the faculty towards attempting to create positive school culture change was an opportunity to collaborate for the greater good.

Explaining the Problem

There are five explanations from the literature I derive to explain the problem of LGBT slurs in our schools. First, there is a persistent lack of educational leaders bringing

LGBT issues to teachers and staff. Second, the necessary space for a teachers and staff to convene and discuss LGBT issue is usually scarce. Third, many professional development series in schools do not address LGBT students. Fourth, addressing teachers' norms and values provides a challenging obstacle to overcome. And finally, there is typically a school culture that is accepting of the silence that falls on LGBT issues. In this next section, I examine how my theory of change and intervention connects to these above explanations.

Theory of Change and Intervention

In the theory of change and intervention, I outline what mental and social processes are needed for envisioned changes to come about and what social supports are needed for this process. Through a review of the professional and research knowledge base, I have identified five main levers to address this design study. These main levers are the following: create cognitive dissonance and awareness, develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization, acknowledge depth of problem and deepen insight, engage in inquiry cycle while creating action space, and reflect on inquiry cycle and action steps. Imbedded in this context, I explain and create psychological safety and reduce fear and defensiveness for participants. In my theory of change and intervention, I explain how I believed learning should have taken place and what learning I presumed was needed for these elements to become incorporated into teachers' practice prior to implementation.

Creating Cognitive Dissonance and Awareness

Cognitive dissonance creates tension between espoused values and realities brought to teachers' awareness. Cognitive dissonance is integral to attitudinal change. This dissonance occurs when a person has competing feelings or beliefs such as disliking gays and lesbians as a group but liking a person who is gay or lesbian individually (Chiasson, 2006). Another example of this dissonance is teachers knowing that LGBT slurs hurt but not actually doing anything about it. For example, simply confronting teachers with data about observing frequency of LGBT slurs when a teacher was close by and the amount of times those teachers intervened can constitute cognitive dissonance between values and acknowledged realities. The more cognitive dissonance that exists within a context of LGBT school culture change, the more motivated teachers will be to question their belief system. By questioning their belief system, these teachers will be more able to change their actions.

Through cognitive dissonance and awareness teachers will name the problem and will be motivated to pursue the issue of slurs further. In order for teachers to change actions towards LGBT issues such as LGBT slurs, they must be presented with data regarding slurs on campus. Teachers may think that there is not a problem of LGBT slurs on campus. The Team will present a slur tally of slurs heard during a typical week at school. In addition, the Team will present students' perspective in a slur survey. By confronting teachers with these statistics, teachers will engage in cognitive dissonance and awareness by beginning to acknowledge the data as true. Some teachers may claim that the data are false, others may simply deny that the problem exists on campus. LHS is a school with a mission and vision specifically targeting social justice and the success of all students.

Develop a Safe Space for Conversation and Reduce Fear and Defensiveness while Creating Responsibility and Personalization

Once cognitive dissonance and awareness occurs, teachers and faculty may assume personal responsibility for tolerance of slurs. When an organization sets out to transform real and significant cultural shifts, true change can be achieved (Schein, 1998). In order for that cultural shift to happen, I as the researcher must create a safe place for conversations to take place. It is important to create psychological safety with my design study participants as they engage in these slur conversations. Therefore, as a researcher, I must address fear and defensiveness that may arise during this change process. By reducing fear and defensiveness, participants' norms, beliefs, and values can change. Some fears that may arise during this organizational change process might include the following: fear of temporary incompetence; fear of punishment for incompetence; fear of loss of personal identity; and fear of loss of group membership. These fears may reveal themselves in the form of denial, scapegoating, and/or bargaining (Coghlan and Brannick, 2007). In order to reduce these three defensiveness responses, I as the researcher will create psychological safety through creating a safe space.

Acknowledge Depth of Problem and Deepen Insight

Once fear and defensiveness have been reduced, teachers will be able to understand the multiple factors that contribute to the faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs. To achieve this understanding, the learner must be actively involved in the discovery of the deeper layers of the problem. Before the teachers and faculty engage in an inquiry cycle and create an action space to create change, they must share personal experiences and explanations as to why the slur problem has not been addressed in the past. This deepening of understanding must come from the teachers themselves to create the foundation for a more permanent change rather than simply going through the motions of a professional development cycle.

Engage in Inquiry Cycle while Creating Action Space

After teachers and staff have been able to understand the multiple factors that contribute to the faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs, teachers and staff can develop, simulate and understand the effectiveness of various intervention strategies. When the learner is actively involved in the design of this learning process, true change can occur (Schein, 2004). Teachers and staff will discuss various intervention strategies and hypothesize what strategies may work best including real scenarios and role-playing. Sharing real experiences and role-playing as part of the change process can illuminate tangible situations that teachers can address immediately for potential results (Schein, 2004).

Efficacy

After sharing real experiences and role-playing ways in which teachers can intervene when hearing slurs, faculty will reflect on the inquiry cycle and create next action steps as a faculty. This final step in the change process will assist teachers and staff to develop efficacy in with the intervention strategies through reflection and fine-tuning next steps in the anti-LGBT slur process. Through this collective reflection process, teachers are more likely to disrupt the existing LGBT slur paradigm. With a collective resolution of a commitment that the LGBT slur issue will no longer be ignored

on campus, but rather addressed specifically, may create sustainable LGBT school change.

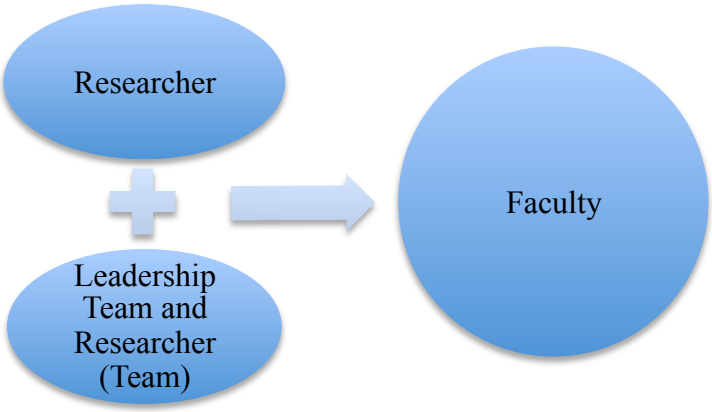
Preconditions for Implementing the Design

In order for SHU:SH to be implemented effectively, minimal conditions need to exist at the school site. First, there needs to be a stable school environment so that school wide issues of management and discipline do not preclude the time and energy of teachers and staff. Second, the principal needs to be in support of SHU:SH. Third, the faculty (my unit of treatment) needs to be interested in growing positively in the area of LGBT school issues and hold basic trust for each other and the design study process. SHU:SH is not intended as a mandated process. If teachers are voluntarily committed to positively improving their school LGBT culture, SHU:SH is more likely to be successful. Finally, the competence of the researcher to carry out this design study must be in place. Without these preconditions, SHU:SH will most likely be affected negatively.

Description of Organizational Frame

The organizational frame consists of three main components: the researcher, the leadership team and researcher (Team), and the faculty (Figure 1). As the researcher, I worked within the Team to co-design the main activities and events for SHU:SH. The main activities are comprised of five professional development sessions with the following theory of change and intervention themes for each session: create cognitive dissonance and awareness, develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization, acknowledge depth of problem and deepen insight, engage in inquiry cycle while creating action space, and efficacy. Within each of these five sessions, I have created the session main activities, low inference behavioral indicators during the sessions, learning objectives, and Team activities (Appendix R).

Figure 1: Description of Organizational Frame



The total number of participants in this study is 25 adults. The number of faculty and staff that participated in this project was comprised of 18 teachers, 5 staff members, and 2 administrators. The leadership team and researcher (Team) consisted of three teachers, two staff members and two administrators (me as one of the administrators). The faculty consisted of 18 teachers, five staff members, and two administrators. I

determined these numbers by looking at the total faculty and staff numbers. For the Team, I determined these numbers by taking a statistically significant portion of the overall total numbers of the three classifications as to have adequate representation from each: teachers, staff, and administration. This study accompanied collective activities that typically take place in a school professional development environment. Although I was the principal of this school during the duration of the study, the Team composed of adult teachers and adult staff members on campus lead the way. As mentioned previously, I worked with this Team in its efforts.

Design Components

There are three main components to conducting the research: professional development sessions (observations), interviews and follow up conversations, and spontaneous conversations. These interview and follow up conversations and spontaneous conversations are open and held in the spirit of collegial interaction about events in the school. This total study period was three months. My research follows the innovative action research protocols as a design development project (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). In the next section, I will explain these three main components of my research and data collection.

Professional Development Sessions: Observations

SHU:SH consists of five main activities. SHU:SH professional development sessions occurred over a three-month period approximately every week for 45 minutes each. While SHU:SH is not in the structured sessions as outlined below, I as the action researcher engaged in the general empirical method in action research projects: constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action with the Team (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). Individual teachers are not identified through the professional development observations where all teachers, staff, and administration were present and participated. I was interested in the overall change data in the teachers and staff as a collective group and not the individual. The Team followed an observation protocol guide to collect data (Appendices C-G). The Team documented these professional development sessions by using the observation protocol.

Interviews and Follow up Conversations

The interviews and follow up conversations took place in individual teachers' classrooms and/or staff members' offices. The Team conducted these interviews and follow up conversations. The Team conducted the interviews and recorded these interviews and follow up conversations (Appendices H-L). Interviews and follow up conversations occurred after each professional development session. I documented these interviews and follow up conversations by having the Team conduct audio-recorded interviews.

Spontaneous Conversations

The spontaneous conversations occurred on campus, in teachers' classrooms, hallways, faculty lounge, etc. These conversations were not recorded as they were not planned conversations. The Team documented these spontaneous conversations by following the spontaneous conversation protocol (Appendix M).

Design Research

For my dissertation, I chose a design study. I chose design research because the purpose of my study is to connect an actual education product that can be transferable to another educational context. In design research, I attempted to design a remedy for a real educational problem. This is a study of the actual process and impact of a specific instructional design and development efforts testing its theory of action (Richey et al., 2004). Design studies are distinct in that they explicitly serve to develop an intervention for a problem to meet the innovative aspirations and requirements of the design challenge (van den Akker, 1999). In those instances the impact of the intervention to be developed are often unclear, consequently the research focuses on realizing limited but promising examples of those interventions. The aim is not to elaborate and implement complete interventions but to arrive at prototypes that increasingly meet the innovation purposes and requirements. The process is often cyclical or spiral; analysis, design evaluation and revision activities are iterated until an acceptable balance between ideals and realization has been achieved (van den Akker, 1999). In my design development process, I allocated specific time and space to do this.

Design studies are similar to action research methodology in that they are the following: both are concerned with developing practical knowledge to solve problems; are research *in* action rather than research *about* action; are concurrent with action; and are collaborative (Coghlan and Brannick, 2007). In addition, design development research is similar to action research in that they both address developing practical, applicable knowledge to solve actual problems; this is to say, the research is in action not about action (Coghan and Brannick, 2007).

Drawing from my theory of action, I now describe what kind of research I conducted to determine the effectiveness of the envisioned SHU:SH. First, I discuss the methodology of design study. Second, I discuss my data collection analysis and process centering on the two components of design research: impact and process data. Then, I share a selection of study participants, unit of treatment, and analytical procedures. Finally, I address concerns about reliability, validity, credibility, and generalizability.

Methodological Choices

Methodology is a theory that explains how I connect my research purpose to my collected evidence. I chose an advocacy foundation for my epistemological framework, rooted in subjectivism and post-positivism. I wanted to see a positive change in campus LGBT culture. Therefore, I chose an advocacy stance for LGBT students. The study's methodology also emerges from these same assumptions. This study is organized as a design study with the faculty as the unit of analysis. Because I am the researcher who is also an integral part of my organization, I employed action research as well.

Action Research

I chose a design study with an action research approach. Action research is a collaborative democratic partnership involving research concurrent with action (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). Action research focuses on research in action using an approach to study the resolution of important social or organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). Action research is about real-time change and what takes place at the core of its story (Coghlan and Brannick,

2010). This is exactly what I wanted to see happen as the researcher: a real-time change with LGBT issues on campus.

Basic Elements of the Research: Baseline, Impact and Process Data

Research for design development has two functions: one, assessing the design's impact; and two, investigating the process of design implementation in order to better understand how outcomes were influenced by the process. To provide evidence to establish the effectiveness of the design challenge intervention, I used baseline, impact, process, and outcome data (van den Akker, 1999).

Baseline Data

I collected two types of baseline data (Table 3). One, by collecting current slur tally data (Appendix A), I explained to teachers the severity of the LGBT slur problem. Two, the student survey on LGBT slurs on campus and intervention frequency (Appendix B) contributed to the student perception of LGBT slurs and intervention. I collected this baseline data at the beginning of SHU:SH to be compared to outcome data in order to assess the impact of the professional development series on teachers' learning. I also collected these two types of data (Appendix A, B) at the end of the study to compare to my baseline data.

Process Data

Process data included qualitative data such as the observation protocol indicators, Team interviews and follow up conversations, and spontaneous conversations between Team members and teachers and staff that established the contribution of the process to the potential impact of the design. Because I created a design study, much of my data collection was captured in the process, or during, SHU:SH. I asked two questions during this process: (1) is SHU:SH design feasible, in other words, is it appropriate for the time, energy, resources and capacity the participants bring to the series?; and, (2) do the scheduled strategies and activities work as constructed, in other words, do these activities elicit the types of learning and action I surmised they would?

Impact Data

My impact data consisted of pre and post SHU:SH student survey, low inference and quantitative data through the tallying of the frequency of slurs on campus (Table 3). I examined whether the professional development series format enabled teachers to learn strategies to design and implement high impact strategies that thwart LGBT slurs on campus. Each professional development session was designed to begin with teachers sharing their reflections of the previous sessions and what they observed in the classroom and hallways since the previous session. This reflection I had hoped would allow teachers an opportunity to share the meanings they are creating as members of the SHU:SH. Using my observation protocol indicators, I determined in what ways the experience of the professional development series was intended to lead to teacher growth from the teacher and researcher perspective. To guide my analysis of each session I created observation protocol guides (Appendices C-G) to determine the specific goals for each session as well as interview protocols (Appendices H-L) and a spontaneous conversation data collection protocol (Appendix M).

Table 3: Intervention Design: Data Collection

Baseline and Impact Data	**Process Data**
1. Slur tally (Appendix A) 2. Student slur survey (Appendix B)	1. Professional Development Sessions: Observation Protocols (Appendix C-G) 2. Team Interviews/Follow up Conversations (Appendix H-L) 3. Spontaneous Conversations between Team and Teachers and Staff (Appendix M)

I used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data to create, collect and analyze my design study (Table 3). Qualitative data can assist the research in precisely seeing which events led to which outcomes allowing the researcher to derive rich explanations (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I chose qualitative, analytic action research as it allowed me as the researcher to understand the meaning people have constructed from their experiences (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010; Creswell, 2007). This means that I examined the experiences of a group of teachers and staff as they attempted to engage in a change oriented LGBT protocol process to assist their school in solving actual problems (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). Impact data are quantitative in nature. I chose quantitative data because it allowed me to keep a distance to respondents and to measure effects with relative accuracy.

Selection of Study Participants and Unit of Treatment

The research participants included high school teachers and staff members who were willing to begin to create a more positive LGBT school culture through SHU:SH. LHS's office staff was interested in being a part of the LGBT design study. Participant recruitment was based on teacher interest and an expressed commitment to participate in the three-month study. Specific LGBT protocol guidelines were developed to govern the study group process and the issues of confidentiality. Commitment to a three-month study group, which met approximately each week, was strictly voluntary and there was no financial compensation in the plan.

My role as the action researcher can be described as participant and change agent. In design studies, the consultant is both the design developer and the evaluator of its implementation. In this way, I am a concerned researcher who wanted to see teachers and students positively impacted by this LGBT design process.

My design study SHU:SH was developed to promote awareness of LGBT slurs on campus and develop strategies to decrease the occurrence of these slurs. The unit of treatment is the entire faculty. SHU:SH impact and process data served to illuminate the connection between pro-LGBT critical incidents of teacher behavior and the greater LGBT school culture.

Data Analysis: Analytical Procedures

I used a mixed methods approach employing qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures as well as utilized the Internet based *dedoose* database system. I consulted the literature and my theory of action to develop an initial coding system for data analysis (Appendix P). I also relied on an inductive coding strategy so that unexpected issues that arise in the data can be captured. Data analysis generally followed

Creswell's steps for analyzing data in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). The first step was to organize and prepare the data for analysis (Creswell, 2007). I read through the field notes and identified preliminary patterns and new questions in an ongoing manner throughout the series (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I generated numerical information from pre- and post-surveys about students' perspectives on slurs as well as slur tally data to support the qualitative analysis of the data while analyzing quantitative data. Embedding a quantitative analysis within a qualitative analysis enables the findings from one method to inform the other; this approach also triangulates and generalizes information by collaborating findings from different methods and by seeking contradictions that help to reframe issues and increase methodological rigor (Calfee and Sperling, 2010). The data then was organized logically to link program processes to participant outcomes (Patton, 1990). During this data analysis process, I continuously reviewed my design study's purpose to ensure I was focusing my attention on the right findings in my study. In addition to qualitative data analysis, I employed quantitative methods to conduct my study as mentioned above.

Reliability, Validity, Transferability

Reliability is established in this design study through the use of common procedures, similar protocols, and predictability. In my study, I was committed before I began my research to a specific procedure. My impact data are structured and low inference. My process data come from observations and interviews that follow clear protocols developed for carefully planned activities. In this design study, main concepts are carefully operationalized for the impact data and the learning goals and detailed data collection strategies for each SHU:SH session. Impact data are pre- and post-student surveys and Team slur tally survey. For each SHU:SH session, the Team conducted routine process data collection strategies that repeated themselves reliably which are the following: observations, field notes, session notes, and reflections.

Validity was established by collecting multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009). In my design study, as discussed previously, I have multiple sources for both impact and process data. Internal validity attempts to establish a causal relationship between the treatment and the outcome (Yin, 2009). It is crucial to determine that what I created as my intervention is actually causing the outcomes I predicted. External validity can be established if I am able to demonstrate that my design development study can provide real outcomes. In my study, I hoped to establish a relationship between the intervention and frequency of slurs on campus. I reviewed the analysis of the process data for each session and the impact data to organize data based on their relevance to each design element.

Generalizability in design development studies refers to the extent to which an intervention can potentially be transferred to a different context and result in similar findings (van den Akker, 1999). Although my design is not a universal tool, I hoped I could transfer my design to a similar context with similar conditions to produce similar outcomes. I provided detailed evidence and descriptions of the content, participants, and the role of the participant researcher to enable readers to transfer information to other settings and determine whether findings can be transferred.

Conclusion

The purpose of this design study was to create a LGBT inclusive school culture by focusing on reducing frequency of LGBT slurs in one social justice oriented high school by focusing on the adults. It addressed the problem of practice that teachers in this school tended not to intervene when they heard LGBT slurs as suggested by the literature this is a common pattern in American high schools.

The study aimed at designing a set of activities that raise awareness of the problem, create motivation to intervene, and build capacity to do so effectively when slurs occur. Teachers can be one of the most powerful factors in creating a safer school culture through stopping LGBT slurs (Bockenek and Brown, 2001; Kosciw et al., 2009). Teachers are the primary adult contact students have throughout their school day and many teachers hear gay slurs in the classroom and do not intervene. My study focused on creating a school culture where teachers intervene when they hear students using LGBT slurs in the classroom. Creating this culture is a collective and ongoing process in which this social justice themed school has been involved in for some time. This action research study was embedded into these collective activities.

In action research, the researcher is an active participant, even leader, in the transformation process (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). The traditional divide between researcher as observer and the research subjects as the ones being observed is replaced by a collegial, participatory approach that builds on shared purposes, shared understandings, and relationships of trust.

The objective of the study was to identify prototypical professional development and distributive leadership practices that could be transferred to similar schools facing a similar problem. The study thus contributed to practitioner oriented design knowledge shared in the professional space of public school educators. It was hypothesized that at the end of implementation of activities, the frequency of intervening when slurs occur will increase. What actually occurred in this study was quite different from the design and processes I had researched, developed, and attempted to implement.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

Before implementing this design study, the leadership team and I (Team) conducted a local needs assessment. The Team consisted of five people: one principal (me), one assistant principal, two teachers, and one staff member. The role as principal was action researcher and lead designer of SHU:SH. The Team members are people who had shown a strong interest in creating positive LGBT culture change on campus evidenced by their social justice lesson plans or intervening when they heard slurs used by students on campus. These members were not aware of my research design prior to self-selection to participate in this school change project.

The local needs assessment included a slur tally both pre- and post-SHU:SH in order to explain to the teachers the severity of the LGBT slur problem on campus. The data had two functions: baseline data and a pedagogical tool. The survey baseline data not only was a comparison to the post-SHU:SH survey but also the baseline data was used to present to teachers and staff during the first SHU:SH professional development session. Following this local needs assessment the Team collected one type of baseline data, the student slur survey. I convened a meeting with the other Team members to create the student slur survey. One teacher on the Team distributed the school wide student slur survey prior to the first SHU:SH professional development series and collected this baseline data at the beginning of SHU:SH to be compared to this same survey at the end of the study.

The process data were also collected and analyzed to consider the effectiveness of the five professional development sessions. I used the observation protocol guides as well as interview and spontaneous conversation data to research my process data. I have organized the process data analysis section into five sections representing each one of the professional development sessions.

In this chapter, I analyze each type of data and present my findings. First, I present the design impact data analysis including the baseline and outcome findings of the student slur survey. Next, I discuss supporting evidence for my impact data including additional student survey questions and a pre- and post-SHU:SH slur tally. Then, I discuss the design process, analyzing data from each of the five professional development sessions.

Impact Data Analysis

Design impact data were collected to determine whether at the end of the intervention teachers intervened with higher frequency when they heard slurs. I collected baseline and impact data through student surveys. The student survey captured frequency of slurs heard by students and their perception of teachers and other adults at school intervening when slurs occurred in the classroom and on campus. After session 5 of SHU:SH, I re-administered the student slur survey.

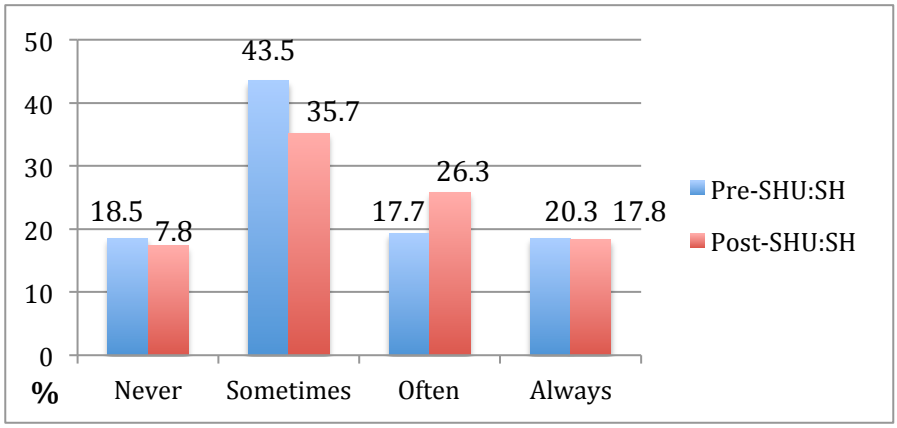
The student survey was short and administered during advisory class a class dedicated to discussing grades and general school culture topics with students. The most salient impact is indicated by one question: *If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind, how often do teachers, staff, or other adults on campus step in and try to stop the slur or talk to the student?* The pre-SHU:SH student slur survey showed the response rate was

91.7%. 232 students from grades 9-12 out of 253 total surveys distributed completed the survey: 120 female, 110 male, and 3 transgender. 47 students 20.3%, reported teachers, staff, or other adults step in and try to stop the slur or talk to the student *always*, 41 *often* 17.7%, 101 *sometimes* 43.5%, and 43 *never* 18.5% (Figure 2).

Outcome data indicate that the students' perceptions of slurs and teacher intervention were varying in terms of frequency and amount of intervention. In the post-SHU:SH student slur survey, the response rate was 213 students of 253 who completed the survey, 84.2%: 119 female, 87 male, and 7 transgender students in 9-12 grades completed the survey. 38 students 17.8% reported teachers, staff, or other adults step in and try to stop the slur or talk to the student *always*, 56 *often* 26.3%, 76 *sometimes* 35.7%, and 38 17.8% *never* and 5 2.4% with no response (Figure 2). The lower number of respondents in the post-survey could have biased the responses. During the post-slur survey there were a significant number of field trips and on campus college recruitment events that may have prohibited some students from completing the post-survey.

The purpose of my design study was to increase the frequency of teachers stepping in to stop slurs on campus. After SHU:SH, I expected the overall pattern for Figure 3 to reflect an increase in the frequency of students reporting that teachers, staff, and other adults on campus stepping in to stop a slur or talk to a student. Baseline findings for the student survey impact data indicate that the students' perceptions of slurs and teacher intervention were varying in terms of frequency and amount of intervention. As discussed below, although the results yielded no statistical significance for question 2, the percentage of frequency that students reported adults stepping in to try and stop a slur increased in the post-SHU:SH *often* category by 8.6% and decreased in the *never* category by .7% (Table 4). These two changes are what I hoped to see when designing SHU:SH. However, the results of the post-SHU:SH categories *sometimes* decreasing by 7.8% and *always* by 2.5% are results I did not hope for nor anticipate. The category *sometimes* did drop, but this is largely because *often* increased. In analyzing question 2, I found that the extreme answers of *never* and *always* did not yield great change, yet the responses *sometimes* and *often* had a greater change pre- and post-SHU:SH. I have reported the pre- and post-survey data in percentages in the figures below. In sum, there were small yet positive changes for question 2 with little overall great change.

Figure 2: Pre and Post Question 2: If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind, how often do teachers, staff, or other adults on campus step in and try to stop the slur or talk to the student?



Supporting Evidence of Impact Data: Student Survey

Although not directly related to my design study, the student survey contained items that would give me an idea of how the school handled slurs above the immediate focus of the design, increasing teacher intervention when they heard slurs. Here I discuss three questions:

- *How often do you hear anti-LGBT slurs directed at students? (examples: fag, faggot, that's so gay, no homo, dyke, lesbo)* (Figure 3)
- *Have you ever talked to a teacher or staff member about anti-LGBT slurs?* (Figure 4)*;* and,
- *If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind, how often do students step in and say something?* (Figure 5).

I wanted to examine the frequency of student-teacher communication hoping the design may have increased classroom conversations. There was a significant reduction in frequency of slurs heard by students post-SHU:SH. In the *sometimes*, *often*, and *always* categories, there was a decrease of students reporting slurs while the *never* category increased. Therefore, overall, students were hearing fewer slurs post-SHU:SH (Figure 3). When students were asked post-SHU:SH how often they talked to teachers regarding LGBT slurs, the response rate for *always* increased by .1% and *sometimes* by 2.1% (Figure 4). There was an increase in students reporting students stepping in when hearing slurs *sometimes* by 5.5% and a decrease of *never* stepping in by 2.4% (Figure 5).

Although not directed related to my intervention design, these small changes evidence a positive school culture change on campus in terms of establishing a safer school for LGBT and all students. Specifically, students in every reporting category stated a decrease in slur frequency on campus. These student survey results parallel the slur tally supporting evidence I discuss in this next section.

Figure 3: Pre and Post Question 1: How often do you hear anti-LGBT slurs directed at students? (examples: fag, faggot, that's so gay, no homo, dyke, and lesbo)

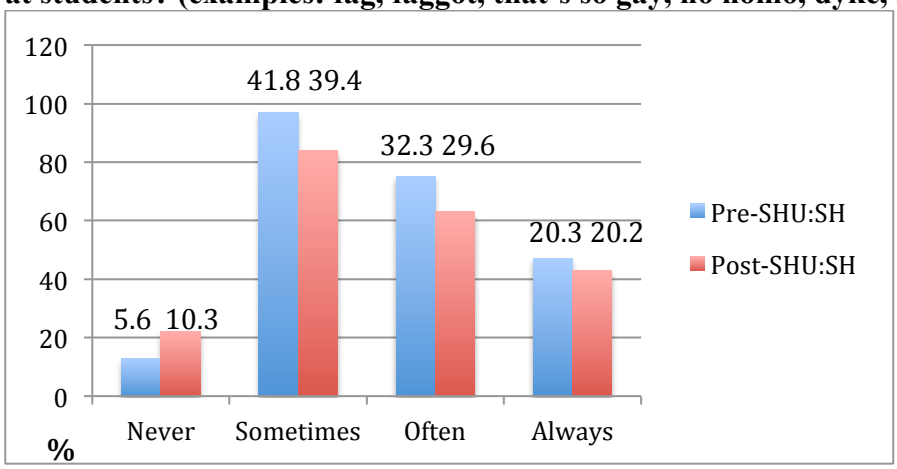


Figure 4: Pre and Post Question 3: Have you ever talked to a teacher or staff member about anti-LGBT slurs?

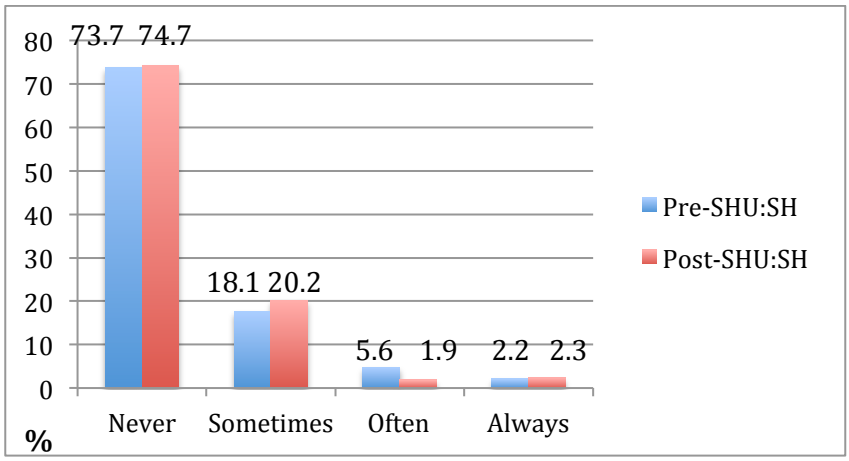
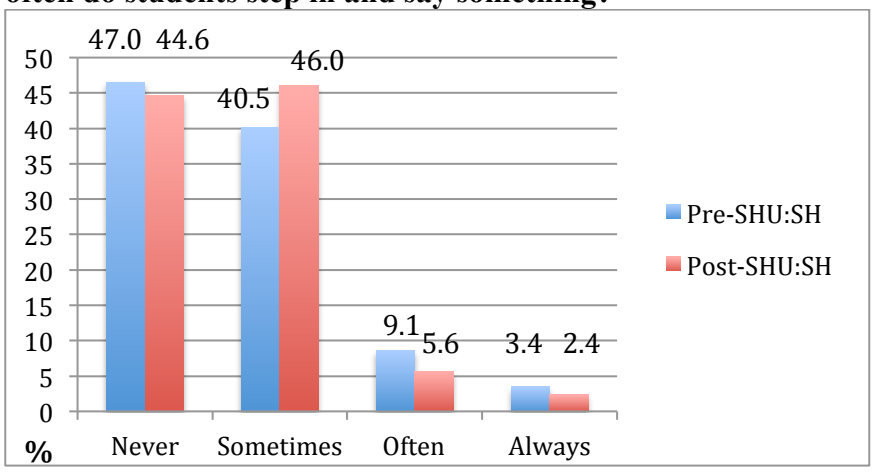


Figure 5: Pre and Post Question 4: If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind, how often do students step in and say something?



To analyze the four survey questions, I used an unpaired t-test, two-tailed with equal variance. *Always* was coded as 4, *often* as 3, *sometimes* as 2, and *never* as 1. The p-value is .3. The pre-SHU:SH mean for question 2 is 2.4 with a standard deviation of 1.0 while the post-SHU:SH mean for question 2 is 2.5 with a standard deviation of 1.0 (Table 4). This comparison is not statistically significant. Nor were the comparisons statistically significant for questions 1, 3, and 4 (Table 4).

Table 4: Slur Survey Mean, Standard Deviation and P Values

	Pre Mean	*Post Mean*	*Pre Standard Deviation*	*Post Standard Deviation*	*T test P value*
Question 2	2.4	2.5	1.0	1.0	.3
Question 1	2.7	2.6	.9	.9	.3
Question 3	1.7	1.7	.8	.7	.6
Question 4	1.4	1.4	.7	.7	.6

In addition to the above analysis, I conducted a reliable result by working with the data and making a composite score (Table 5). I removed all composite scores with any missing data. Now, I have a Cronbach alpha, or reliability score, on the composite scores of 0.96. A score greater than 0.70 is needed on Cronbach's alpha to call the data reliable. When a score is less than 0.70, it is suggested that the question or questions were not reliable. Thus, it would suggest either re-wording them or removing them completely from the analysis.

Table 5: Cronbach Alpha

Mean	15.2424242
Standard Deviation	3.61000548
Alpha	0.96142206
SEM	0.70905081
Number of Items	2

A couple of problems surfaced that affected my ability to do this analysis correctly. I would need the same students to be identified pre- and post-test and I did not have this information. I did a Cronbach's alpha for pre- and it is 0.27, and one for post-test, and it is 0.44 meaning pre- and post-test questions did not hang together. Then, I completed a composite score. But, I did not do a composite score with missing data. I removed the students with missing data and then was able to receive a reliable result. In this next section, I discuss my slur tally as supporting evidence for the impact data.

In addition, I computed a new t-test on the composite scale, the mean of the pre-test items vs. the mean of the post-test items to perform a fair test of my intervention (Table 6). The reason for doing so is that the composite scale, being more reliable and less vulnerable to noise, is more likely to reveal a statistically significant change in scores. This revealed that I did in fact achieve a significant effect in the intended direction one that I am not detecting in the individual, noisy, items. In this next section, I discuss my slur tally as supporting evidence for the impact data.

Table 6: Composite Scale

T-test Composite	0.763607
Mean Pre Composite	8.082251
Mean Post Composite	8.029126
Mean Pre	2.976293
Mean Post	2.569767

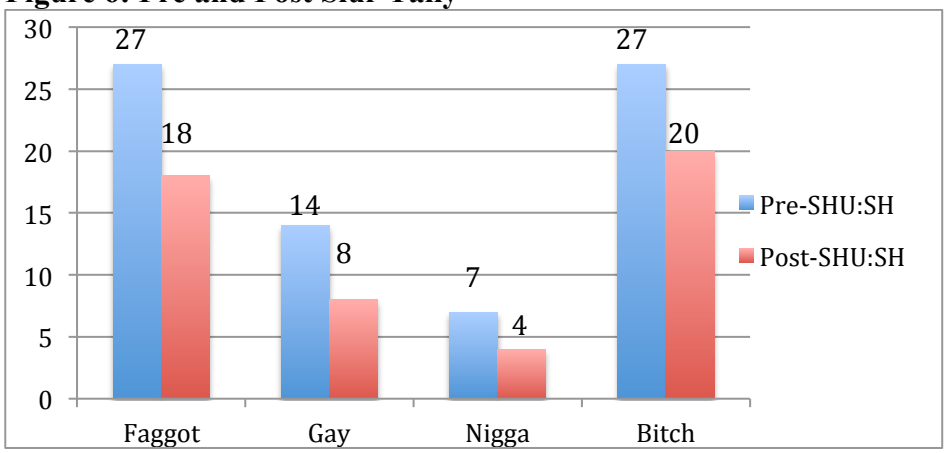
Supporting Evidence for Impact Data: Slur Tally

The Team collected two slur tally data, one pre- and one post-SHU:SH (Appendix A). The pre- and post-survey tally evidenced the frequency of slurs heard on campus identified in the slur tally (Appendix A). The Team tallied all slurs heard on campus during a five-day period pre- and post-SHU:SH (Figure 6). Any slur heard on campus received a tally mark each time it was heard. These data unfortunately can also only be used as supporting data but not as direct measure of the effect of the design.

The Team collected the slur tally data pre-SHU:SH approximately two weeks before SHU:SH session 1 began. The post-SHU:SH survey occurred one month after session 5 concluded; one of these weeks was spring break. The Team included two staff

members, one teacher, and two administrators. In order to have these tallies done surreptitiously as to avoid bias, the Team was instructed to tally any slur they heard throughout the 40-minute lunch period for five consecutive days pre- and post-SHU:SH. There were five designated locations where the Team members stood and tallied each day, at the same time, during lunch. These five locations were the five most student-populated lunch eating areas on campus. These five designated locations were already each Team member's designated supervision area for lunch as to not disrupt the typical school functions and maintain regular school technical patterns. Although the decline in tallies and the decline in students reporting slurs are important, these data points cannot be directly related to the design study.

Figure 6: Pre and Post Slur Tally



The pre-SHU:SH slur tally data indicate that slur frequency was much more common before the design intervention than after it. The word *faggot* was heard twenty-seven times in one week before the invention while after the intervention it was tallied eighteen times. *Gay* was less common than *faggot* at fourteen times before SHU:SH and eight times after the intervention. The Team heard the word *nigga* seven times before and four times after SHU:SH. Finally, the slur *bitch* was tallied twenty-seven times before and twenty times after SHU:SH.

Outcome findings for the slur tally indicate a decrease overall in the number of slurs heard and tallied by the Team in a five-day period post-SHU:SH. *Faggot* was tallied eighteen times post SHU:SH marking a nine tally mark difference from the baseline findings. The word *gay* also decreased from fourteen to eight tally marks. *Nigga* decreased three tally marks from seven to four. Finally, *bitch* only dropped seven tally marks from twenty-seven to twenty post SHU:SH. The results of the slur tally outcome findings evidence a significant decrease in slurs heard on campus by adults. In this next section, I present the impact data and supporting evidence conclusion.

Impact Data Conclusion

The teachers and staff embarked on an anti-bullying campaign before this study began. Students, teachers, and faculty engaged in meaningful anti-bullying classroom lessons while culminated into a school wide field trip to view the movie *Bully*. Although LHS is a social justice focused school, little attention had been given to creating a safer

campus culture for LGBT students. As part of my design study, I collected baseline and impact data to measure effectiveness of my design. These data were the slur tally and the student slur survey. In between these pre- and post-impact data sources, the Team engaged the teachers and faculty in a five-session professional development series designed to create a safer school culture where teachers intervene more frequently when they hear slurs on campus.

An overall improvement in slur occurrence is indicated in the post-SHU:SH survey and slur tally, but it may not be due to the slur intervention focus of my design. It is possible that teachers may have talked with students about LGBT issues on campus in the context of the anti-bullying campaign without making slurs the focus since the teachers may have felt insecure about the slur issue as noted in the process data in the next section. Teachers may have discussed LGBT issues or bullying in general terms in a safer teacher context with the result being that students used fewer slurs on campus. SHU:SH may have created more awareness overall but not the direct change for students that could indicate a deep conversation and direct intervention to slurs on campus.

The goal of my design was to experience an increase in teachers intervening when they heard slurs on campus. The impact data suggests that teachers may not have intervened that much more frequently post-SHU:SH yet the occurrence of slurs on campus decreased. One explanation is by engaging in the professional development series, slurs decreased on campus and teachers intervened slightly more frequently as a result of SHU:SH. Post-SHU:SH, I expected an increase in the frequency of students reporting that teachers, staff, and other adults on campus stepping in to stop a slur or talk to a student. Overall, there was a slight increase in students reporting teachers stepping in to thwart slurs on campus. Teachers did step in more frequently when they heard slurs that may explain a decrease in the slur occurrence on campus. Another explanation for the decrease of slurs on campus is teachers engaging in the overall anti-bullying campaign classroom lessons with students and participating in the student surveys brought an awareness to the slur issue on campus enough for students to use slurs less frequently. A third explanation is teachers bringing the content of the SHU:SH professional development sessions back to the classroom for discussion and sharing the communication norms for adults and students on campus presenting an authoritative approach to slur response.

Overall, there was a positive outcome as a result of SHU:SH including broad school wide awareness around bullying and LGBT issues. However, little teacher intervention growth and conversations occurred specifically about slurs their origins and impact. The items that are related to my design did not perform specifically according to expectation, but there was some improvement. There was a small improvement in overall positive school culture change. Yet, this positive change may be attributed to the overall anti-bullying campaign with SHU:SH being a component of the campaign. I explore this concept in chapter 5. Next, I present the design elements to my process data.

Process Data Analysis

Design research is an opportunity to investigate the various stages of what happens during the design process. My design is in the exploratory stages of development. It began as my personal response to the continuous neglect of LGBT issues being addressed in our schools. Informed by the professional knowledge base, I

developed a theory of action for this design. The professional knowledge base led me to design SHU:SH. I subsequently invited other leaders at my school to collaborate with me as co-designers on my Team while engaging in the SHU:SH process. Their participation in the design process marked the beginning of my design development research. Design development data were collected to logically link my investigation of the design process with the outcome data.

Before beginning SHU:SH, several activities needed to occur in order to prepare for the five professional development sessions. First, I spoke with several teachers and staff members who had organized the anti-bullying campaign on campus regarding SHU:SH. Through these conversations, I asked teachers and staff if they were interested in being a part of the Team to guide the process. Some teachers and staff were excited about the project and wanted to assist, others communicated that although they were excited about the project, they were already too overwhelmed with existing teacher and staff duties to participate. Second, I met with the formed Team to discuss SHU:SH roles and duties. The team consisted of three teachers, two staff members, and two administrators (one assistant principal, and me, the principal). I informed the Team that I preferred the three teachers to lead the professional development sessions as the anti-bullying campaign was a teacher initiative, teacher driven, and did not want my authoritative stance to negatively affect the project. The teachers happily accepted their roles and each had facilitated other types of professional development pre-SHU:SH. Finally, the student slur survey and slur tally were administered in preparation for discussion. In this next section, I discuss each session of the professional development series through my process data.

Session 1: Creating Cognitive Dissonance and Awareness

Description of Session

All teachers except two were present for session 1. The two teachers who were not present attended a professional development at another school this day. Before session 1 began, I (W-F) read the recruitment script (Appendix T) to teachers and staff regarding SHU:SH and their participation outside of the professional development series.[6] Then, the facilitator distributed the pre-SHU:SH student slur survey results (Appendix B) discussed in the impact section and gave each teacher about five minutes to look at the data in front of her. Following the data review, the facilitator asked the following prompts: *How do you make sense of these data? What is the problem? How do we define it?* Teachers were then allowed to talk freely with each other as a group about what they saw and share with the group whatever came to mind. My hope was to have teachers realize that our school had a problem with LGBT slurs.

The facilitator (PA-F) reminded the teachers and staff that LHS had discussed the importance of language use amongst adults and students on campus, shared that our school participated in a week-long event of anti-bullying awareness and activities leading up to a school wide field trip to see the documentary, *Bully*, and reminded teachers that as a social justice school, teachers and staff decided to continue this conversation of making

[6] I have abbreviated participant demographic information in each session; this information is participant self-identified; white, and female (W-F).

sure our students are safe when they are in our classrooms and walking in our hallways.[7] While the facilitator was conducting session 1, the remaining Team members collected observational data as participant observers using the protocol.

Many whole group conversation topics addressed my hope of teachers beginning to realize that our school had a problem with slurs as the data stated. One (AA-MA-F) teacher shared with the group that she *hear*[s] *people say that's so gay, no homo all the time on campus* (O1 – 12/05/12).[8] While another teacher (W-F) shared that *being aware of language is important* (O1 – 12/05/12), a teacher (W-M) stated *this survey is good* (O1 – 12/05/12), and a teacher (AA-NA-F) expressed discomfort in the conversation such as *I felt that they survey was heavy LGBT…I am from the South and just don't want to get into it any further* (O1 – 12/05/12).[9] One teacher (W-M) shared that he thought *#4 on the survey is confusing* (O1 – 12/05/12) while another teacher (W-M) asked *what is the genesis of this survey?* (O1 – 12/05/12).

Continuing the conversation in the whole group, a marked conversational shift occurred when a teacher (W-F) used the word *nigger* (O1 – 12/05/12) as an example of a slur. From my perspective, this teacher was illustrating a sympathetic point in an extremely clumsy manner evidenced by her matter of fact in using the *n word*. A teacher (AA-MA-F) asked this teacher *not to use this word when talking with adults in the room* (O1 – 12/05/12). There was a strained silence and vigilant attentiveness in the room. In response to this request, the first teacher indicated that she did not see why she *should not use the word* when talking with adults in the room (O1 – 12/05/12). The facilitator intervened in this exchange and asked clarity on communication norms asking, *Can we not say the n word or b word?* (O1 – 12/05/12). Some teachers were looking around the room at each other with shock evidenced by their wide eyes and open mouths, others were looking down at their papers, while other teachers continued to exude strained silence and vigilant attentiveness. The facilitator responded in the midst of this palpable strain by reminding participants *to be aware of the language used* in the professional development and how *others may be affected by it* (O1 – 12/05/12). One teacher (AA-NA-F) left the room following the teacher's use of the *n word* (O1 – 12/05/12). The teacher who originally said the *n word* informed the group that *she will not continue to use the n word* because she was *not going to stand on a mountain and die for this issue…we are all adults here* (O1 – 12/05/12).

Now, confusion arose and a sense of crisis pervaded the group. A teacher (W-F), other than the teacher who used the *n word*, shared that she did not feel comfortable using *the n word or talking to students about it…what do I do?* (O1 – 12/05/12). Another teacher (AA-MA-F) asked this teacher, *Why don't you feel comfortable about that? You don't have to be gay to defend LGBT students* (O1 – 12/05/12). Then, yet a different, teacher (W-F) left the room (O1 – 12/05/12). A fourth teacher (W-F) shared that she gets so angry when she hears slurs that even during the session she was *shaking*, and that she *tries to step in and have a conversation* (O1 – 12/05/12). As stated earlier, the facilitator ended session 1 with a respectful pause after teachers had finished their conversations by

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[7] Queer, Palestinian-American, female

[8] African-American and Mexican-American, female; O1 is session 1 observation. For all dissertation data quote codes see Appendix S.

[9] White, female; white, male; African-American and Native-American female

commenting on the *importance of historical context for adults as well as students when hearing slurs* and *we as adults on campus are able to step in when we hear students using these words* (O1 – 12/05/12). The facilitator concluded with assigning the homework for the next session and closed session 1. Teachers and staff left the room quietly with some small chatter. It felt tense evidenced by the *silence in the room* upon exiting, yet teachers seemed to be relieved yet confused about next steps upon leaving (O1 – 12/5/12).

Report on Data Collected Between Sessions

The Team drew from eleven spontaneous conversations outside of session 1, and three interviews that occurred more formally. After session 1, the facilitator shared with me that she could *not believe that someone would use this word in a social justice school* (SC – 12/05/12). The facilitator shared with me that she spoke with the teacher who used the *n word to get some clarity on what happened during session 1,* and the facilitator informed me that *the conversation did not go very far* in terms of the teacher understanding the various viewpoints of session 1, and they *talked for over an hour* (SC – 12/5/12). The teacher who left the room during session 1 shared with me she left the room because *she wanted to keep her dignity* rather than doing something she would have regretted and *did not feel good* about the teacher's use of the *n word* (SC – 12/05/12). Additionally, a teacher revealed that she hears slurs *in the hallway* and *some of the push back* [in session 1]…*came from teachers* [who] *may not see it* [talking about slurs] *necessary to* [their] *instruction* (INT – 12/06/12).

Report on Discussions in Team

One Team member (MA-F) shared *when certain words are used, it can create a hostile environment, or an unsafe feeling, or a feeling of hate and racism, sexism, homophobia, this is not what this school stands for…I am feeling harassed…this is a really tough situation* (LTC – 12/05/12).[10] There was discomfort amongst the Team even though we were united in our social justice philosophy. Another Team member (AA-MA-F) stated, *I do not feel comfortable facilitating the next professional development session with how some teachers responded today* (LTC – 12/05/12). And, another Team member (PA-F) shared that *there was complete denial, no acknowledgement of* [a] *problem existing* (LTC – 12/05/12). A Team member (MA-F) shared that *we need to address norms and values at the next meeting around how we communicate* (LTC – 12/05/12) as she had a spontaneous conversation wherein two teachers shared with her that they were unclear if *slut* or *no homo* were slurs (SC – 12/05/12) while another spontaneous conversation illuminated that a teacher was not sure if *wetback* or *beaner* were inappropriate words to use on campus as *students use them all the time* (SC – 12/05/12). Although the use of the *n word* was upsetting and offensive, the participants may have used this opportunity to deflect or derail serious discussion of the LGBT slur issue we had begun to discuss.

Reflection of Team in Action

There was discomfort amongst the Team as we were surprised by the events that occurred in session 1. All Team members had formally studied social justice education

[10] Mexican-American, female

and were committed to implementing a model of positive change in their roles on campus and through SHU:SH. The Team was united in their agreement of the following: one, slurs existed on campus; two, teachers and staff were allowing students to use slurs and not intervening; and, three, our school could address this issue and create positive school culture change. The Team response to session 1 brought up individual reexamination of whether certain team members wanted to continue participation in the project as leaders.

Decisions as to Next Steps in Action

The Team decided to add a structured protocol to session 2 that would allow each individual session participant in session 2 to have the opportunity to share their feelings and reflections on what they experienced in session 1 if so desired. As discussed in *Chapter Two: Consulting the Research and Professional Knowledge Base*, I identified *LGBT safe spaces* as an important component of school operation and culture. Orienting supportive adults towards the principles of safe spaces seemed a useful direction for my project. In session 2, I take this strategy for an inclusive LGBT school culture and apply it to session 2 by altering the protocol to allow for individual expression in order to hopefully develop a safer space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness.

Interpretation of Events in Light of Analytical Angles

My process data included professional development observations protocols, interview and follow up conversations, as well as spontaneous conversations. The behavioral indicators for creating cognitive dissonance and awareness included the following: *questioning if data are true; acknowledging data is true; and sharing personal experience of hearing anti-LGBT slurs on campus.*

First, the examples of the types of cognitive dissonance I had anticipated are as follows: one teacher stated *if anything happens in my room, that* [slurs] *don't happen in my room* (O1 – 12/05/12), while another teacher stated *I hear slurs all the time in my room and I do not tolerate slurs* (O1 – 12/05/12), and Team members stated they *felt bullied* (LTC – 12/05/12). There was acknowledgement and awareness that slurs did exist on campus. One teacher shared that she hears *people say that's so gay, no homo all the time on campus* (O1 – 12/05/12) while another acknowledged that she tries to say to her students, *don't say that* (O1 – 12/05/12). Students also shared with one teacher that *they heard slurs in other teachers' classrooms and teachers saying they heard slurs, too…that's how I knew it wasn't just happening in our class* (INT – 12/06/12).

Second, the confrontation with data did create the kind of cognitive dissonance and awareness of the problem overall in the teacher group. Session 1 led directly to the deepest depth of the slur problem: slurs hurt. And session 1 gave us a direct example of how they do so. The facilitator did not appear to understand this was happening during session 1 for reasons of time and being overtaxed with the actual slur related conflict in the group.

In session 1 there was conflict and enormous intensity around the potential of slurs to hurt. Session 1 lead directly to the heart of the slur issue: some participants wanted to break the silence by naming the practice; others could not endure the use of slurs; and another, still, used slurs casually. This conflict serves as a critical incident in my design. According to my theory of action, through cognitive dissonance and awareness teachers and staff would be able to name the slur problem and be motivated to

pursue the slur issue further. Teachers and staff were presented slur data from our campus and engaged in cognitive dissonance.

Overall, by confronting the teachers with the student survey revealing jarring statistics regarding slurs on campus, teachers were able to engage in cognitive dissonance and awareness by beginning to acknowledge the data as true. Some teachers thought that there was not a LGBT slur problem on campus, others agreed that the student survey data was factual. Even if there were minor issues in how the survey was worded from the teachers' perspective, teachers expressed a sense of awareness. In order for the teachers to become aware of the problem, the design confronted them with a contradiction between what they thought they were all about (social justice) and their reality. This tension worked according to my theory of action: presenting this data caused discomfort or cognitive dissonance for the teachers; and, the participants were willing to engage with the topic.

Reflection on My Leadership Role in Hindsight

Designing session 1 as I did was appropriate to engage teachers in cognitive dissonance and bring general awareness to the slur issue on campus. However, I was not prepared for the participants to engage in processes that I had anticipated would take place in future sessions. Session 2 was designed to address *developing a safe space for conversation while creating responsibility and personalization* and session 3 was designed to *acknowledge the depth of the slur problem and deepen insight*. The session 1 data reveal how complex the slur issue is when addressing it directly. Although there were previously established norms of communication, an established anti-bullying campaign in progress, and a general awareness regarding slurs on campus as evidenced by the student slur survey, the intensity of the repeated use of the *n word* by one teacher in session 1 caused instant emotional strife and an unsafe space to discuss all aspects of slurs and how to thwart them on campus. The teachers and staff were seemingly unable to handle the situation as a group and the facilitator defaulted to structural norms of politeness and silence even though she addressed the issue in session 1.

I expected some teachers and staff to know that slurs hurt but not actually be doing anything about it. In addition, I anticipated some teachers acknowledging the slur campus data as factual and others denying the data while others would simply deny that the problem exists on campus. But what I did not expect that occurred in session 1 was the swift entry into the beginning discussions of what language adults could employ with each other while addressing the slur issue and the facilitator being unable to respond effectively to the situation. Session 1 illuminated the facilitator's shock of having the intense and immediate depth of the slur issue surface by a teacher using a slur and others being hurt by it. But this was not surfaced and no attempt was made to make participants aware of the fact they were actually at that moment witnesses of why slurs hurt and ought to be a problem. It also shined a light on my reaction as the researcher and designer to this project. I, too, was stunned as a participant observer of not only the use of the *n word* especially the repeated use of it after being asked to not use it by the teacher's colleagues. I did not understand why a teacher would continue to use a word, not just any word, but the *n word*, she had been specifically asked not to use.

I was acutely aware of my position of authority as principal during session 1 and before session 2 as well as participant observer and lead researcher for this project and

did not want to lose the integrity of this dual role. During session 1, I chose not to speak as I wanted the facilitator to lead the group and not have my authority position skew the conversation. During session 1, I chose to take observational notes as a quiet participant observer sitting in the same circle as the rest of the group. Reflecting on my theory of action, I was concerned about how I could move my faculty towards a place of being able to continue our slur discussions as a professional team rather than participate out of compliance because I was their principal and mandated they participate. I wanted teachers and staff to consistently adhere to norms of communication and be able to have courageous conversations. Finally, I was convinced I needed to build confidence and strength with my own Team during our Team meetings to provide suggestions on how to address difficult issues when they arose during the sessions.

Session 2: Develop a Safe Space for Conversation and Reduce Fear and Defensiveness while Creating Responsibility and Personalization

> *We need to ask our school to embrace this conversation, this courageous conversation, and make this a safe place where people can talk about their feelings, thoughts, but realize that we have to have this conversation in a context of respect* (LTC – 12/11/12).

Description of Session

Sitting in a circle at the start of session 2, all teachers including the two who were absent during session 1 were present. In addition, a teacher (MA-F) who worked with the after-school program and a staff member (MA-M) heard about what had happened in session 1 and decided to attend session 2.[11] Because of the contentious nature of session 1, the need to regroup as a faculty, and the Team's concerns about further facilitation, I decided to facilitate session 2. The decision for me to facilitate session 2 was also highly encouraged by the Team.

I thanked the staff for coming to the professional development session 2. I informed the teachers and staff that each of us individually would have a chance to share what our thoughts were to our first session and what they heard on campus between sessions 1 and 2. I acknowledged that there was much tension during the first session and that I wanted to create a safe place for all to discuss the slur issues. I informed the group that I believed in social justice and that having courageous conversations was important to our professional growth. I prompted the participants by asking the following prompts: *What is a slur and why are they hurtful? What is social justice and how do I model that with my actions as an educator here at LHS? What was a time a slur was used towards you and what happened?* I asked the person to my right of the circle to begin and instructed the participants that we would proceed around the table giving each person an opportunity to respond. In addition, I instructed the participants to allow the participant to share her or his thoughts and not respond or interrupt and that if they wanted to respond they could do so during their turn or after everyone had been given the opportunity to speak. I informed teachers that if they did not want to speak they could opt to pass or have their turn occur later in the professional development. My hope was to have teachers *develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating*

[11] Mexican-American, male

responsibility and personalization as originally planned for session 2. What was added to session 2 that was not there originally was the individual response opportunity prior to free discussion among the whole group.

Many individual teacher responses addressed the prompts specifically and participated in the opportunity to share. A teacher (AA-F) stated that *it is never okay to say the n word* (O2 – 12/12/12). One teacher (W-M) shared that he *heard zero slurs in* [his] *classroom this past week because he doesn't tolerate slurs* (O2 – 12/12/12) and followed up with the question, *Are we a school that is going to ban books? Are there certain books we can't read here?* (O2 – 12/12/12). Another teacher (PA-F) stated, *I hear slurs a lot in my classroom…I heard so many I lost count, I brought my list…it is never okay to say the n word or other slurs…my students respect me and appreciate me but still they use words in class because it's so automatic…my students apologize to me and say that I'm sorry miss and don't mean any disrespect…it is so engrained in their vocabulary* (O2 – 12/12/12).

A staff member (MA-M) stated, *it is not okay to use inappropriate language with our students and adults…when I hear that's so gay*, *I pull students aside to talk to them about these issues* (O2 – 12/12/12)[12]. As individuals continued to share their thoughts, there was tension in the room evidenced by two teachers (W-F) opting to pass their individual opportunity to speak both stating they *did not feel comfortable talking about anything* (O2 – 12/12/12).

Another teacher (W-F) shared the following information:

> *I have given it a lot of thought between last week and today. I think I am now much more sensitive to other people's perception of language and words. I have given it a lot of thought… I don't know why s-l-u-t is offensive and others were not…maybe I am just too old or it's a generational thing, maybe that's why I am not as sensitive to language…am I allowed to show a movie that shows w-e-t-b-a-c-k-s portrayed in history? I am confused whether I can incorporate that into my lessons and curriculum, or not…we have a lot of other important conversations to have like benchmark assessments to discuss as a faculty…we don't need to continue this conversation* (O2 – 12/12/12).

Although the responses varied, participants continued to share and were attentive evidenced by many teachers making eye contact with the individual speaker. I continued to thank each person after speaking for sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and kept the individual circling sharing process moving. Another teacher (W-F) talked about volunteering to read *Huck Finn* when she was in school because *no one else wanted to volunteer to read the n word. The n word is in that book, that's literature, so why can't we use it?* (O2 – 12/12/12). A teacher (AA-MA-F) expressed that *it is never okay to use the n word* and she was *concerned that this is a social justice school and where we are headed* (O2 – 12/12/12). A teacher (MA-F) stated that she felt *extremely uncomfortable and didn't feel like talking but that* [she] *had a lot to say* (O2 – 12/12/12). One teacher (AA-MA-F) left the room and came back within a few minutes. When I spoke with her after session 2 as a follow up as to why she walked out of the room, she shared that she was upset because two teachers [W-F] *were passing notes to each other during the session 2 and the notes stated: Why are we talking about this? Are we all racists now?*

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[12] Mexican-American, male

(SC – 12/13/12). She told me that she confronted the two teachers about it and said *it was rude to pass notes back and forth* during session 2 (SC – 12/13/12). One teacher apologized to her. The teacher (AA-MA-F) said, *I don't know she was apologizing…during the sessions both of them didn't have anything to say* (SC – 12/13/12). During session 2, a teacher (AA-M) shared that as *one of the founding members of this social justice school I am shocked that I would have to come to a meeting where this conversation is taking place…that there would have to be any kind of discussion of what is not okay to say*; this teacher also said it was *never okay to use the n word* (O2 – 12/12/12).[13]

The teacher (W-F) who said the *n word* multiple times in session 1, shared, *we have free speech in this country and that is what this country is founded on…there are very few things I will compromise on…I am not going to compromise on my words in regards to someone else's sensibilities* (O2 – 12/12/12). Several teachers looked around the room at each other in shock as evidenced by the various gasps, wide-eyes, and open mouths. The teacher (AA-NA-F) who followed her in the circle said, *I have a transgender child at this school. It's not okay to say that's so gay, or the n word, I want my child to feel safe in my classroom or any classroom* (O2 – 12/12/12). The after-school staff member (MA-F) shared in Spanish through a translator, *I do not want our teachers, students, parents, and staff to use slurs and other hurtful words on campus and in our community* (she then started to cry)*…this language breaks our community apart* (O2 – 12/12/12). Her translator, a staff member (MA-F) consoled her by placing her hand on her back while saying, *I am dating an African-American man, and it is never okay to say the n word. I am just too upset from translating what she just said. It breaks my heart that she feels defeated that someone at our school would use this language* (O2 – 12/12/12). A staff member (MA-F) stated *that the courageous conversation is the most important issue. If we don't talk about this, how can we discuss English language learners as a faculty? I am an English learner who used to be just like our students* (O2 – 12/12/12).

I closed the circle by thanking everyone for sharing their thoughts, experiences, and feelings with the group. I told them it is challenging to engage in these topics but it was important for our school. I informed the group that we only had a few minutes left before the session ended and opened up the circle for an unstructured conversation. The teacher (W-F) who had used the *n word* several times during session 1 said, *I don't understand…I am not going to have my son, who is Latino and who had dated an African-American girl and has been called an n lover that I am not going to restrict my son from saying anything that he wants. He should be able to say whatever he wants* (O2 – 12/12/12). Then, a teacher (AA-F) shared, *we have freedom of speech in this country but our words and actions have consequences…under no circumstances is it okay to use the n word, ever, for school or community…it is never okay to say that's so gay, it is never okay to use the n word* (O2 12/12/12). A teacher (AA-NA-F) stated sincerely while looking at the teacher (W-F), *I feel sorry for you. I don't have hard feelings about what you said last time or today, but I feel sorry for you and what you are going through…it is never okay to say the n word* (O2 – 12/12/12). As the facilitator, I paused to give the teacher (W-F) an opportunity to respond if desired before I closed session 2. She did not respond but looked down at the table. There was still a bit of tension in the room as

[13] African-American, male

participants were quiet, yet as I closed the session by reminding them to continue listening for slurs and that I and the Team would be giving them direction to next steps for session 3. Small conversations started regarding typical school topics and some teachers stayed to continue the conversation.

There was a sense of relief in the room as the participants were leaving as evidenced by side conversations including *some laughter* (O2 – 12/12/12). In following up with a teacher (AA-NA-F) post session 2, she shared that the teacher (W-F) had *apologized for what she had said, using the n word multiple times and asked what she could do to make it up to her*...the teacher (AA-NA-F) said *she could come over for dinner this weekend* (SC – 12/12/12).

Report on Data Collected Between Sessions

The Team drew from six spontaneous conversations and one interview outside of session 2. Many of the key points to the language norms were brought to the Team's attention through spontaneous conversations (Appendix Q). Teachers had several questions regarding what they could do or say as adults on campus: *Am I allowed to teach Huckleberry Finn or other texts that may contain inappropriate language?* (SC – 12/13/12); *Can I use certain words or slurs in my classroom within the context of my lesson?* (SC – 12/15/12); *Are certain words banned on this campus?* (SC – 12/14/12); *What do I do if I hear a student use a slur? (*SC – 12/12/12).

Report on Discussions in Team

Outside of session 2, the Team shared statements regarding social justice and what next steps to take: *we as a social justice school and as educators, people who are responsible in a public setting, receiving taxpayer dollars, cannot condone language that is inappropriate* (LTC – 12/11/12). Another Team member shared that *I envision a school where teachers and staff can intervene when they hear slurs, who tell students it's not appropriate to say certain words, to make sure that the teachers are modeling the language that they would like to hear others use not only in the classroom, on campus, at home, or in society. This is social justice. This is the change that we want to see* (LTC – 12/11/12). Finally, *we individually have to rise up and be that change. Social justice is not just about protesting, boycotting certain products, this, our words, the way we are every minute of every day is social justice* (LTC – 12/11/12).

One Team member shared that *there was a slur on my door today* (SC – 12/12/12). The Team acknowledged that creating communication norms was the beginning to addressing the problem (Appendix Q). Another member reminded us that *our students have reported that there is bullying that exists* (LTC – 12/11/12). We agreed that the communication norms protocol was an important first step to *acknowledging the depth of problem and deepening our insight.*

Reflection of Team in Action

Unfortunately, there was little evidence of less defensiveness. In fact, session 2 seemed to have caused a festering of the conflict presented in session 1. The Team had attempted to *create a safe space* for teachers and staff to share their stories publicly with the multi-pronged approach. But now, the team shifted its focus. Perhaps in response to the demand for *freedom of speech*, the team deemed it necessary to place more attention

on creating language norms for our school as an important issue. Members of the Team mostly identified with the no *n word* side and wanted teachers to not be able to use the *n word* at all. There was a conversation regarding how intricate the entire *n word* conflict was. The Team appeared frustrated by teachers in session 2 continuing to demand *freedom of speech* rather than address the harm the *n word* caused in session 1.

The teachers and the Team seemed to require a more specific policy around language on campus not only for the students but the adults as well rather than discuss what social justice was to them individually or collectively. For example, a teacher (W-F) expressed confusion in session 2 as she did *not understand why we were having this conversation* (O2 – 12/12/12). This confusion was understandable as there were no clear answers to the urgent issue of what teachers were allowed to say on campus.

Decisions as to Next Steps in Action

The Team created a draft communication norms policy before session 3 to share with the faculty in order to abate confusion on what words were allowed on campus and provide a unified structure in how to address the slur problem. The Team decided to dedicate session 3 to discussing these communication norms as a collective team to come to a united final draft with our teachers and staff.

The Team found it challenging to create these norms as we wanted to go beyond a list of communication protocols and address social justice directly. One reason it was challenging is because the issue of using certain curriculum such as *Huck Finn* was still prevalent in the faculty discussions. *We can give teachers a list and say, don't say this, don't say that, it's not creating true change. This is not just about racism but this is also about sexism, homophobia, classism, etc. What are we using in our classrooms to be a role model for our kids?* (LTC – 12/17/12). The Team understood that learning how to make good moral judgments in the classroom is where the true learning and growth has to occur. Some Team members approached the topic with attempting to understand the moral appropriateness of the use of language others approached it with simply stating using the *n word* was wrong (LTC – 12/17/12). Members commented on how *ridiculous* it seemed that we had to inform teachers at a social justice school not to use *inappropriate language on campus* and not to allow our students to do the same while others attempted to address the deeper moral appropriateness issue through the context of sessions 1 and 2 (LTC – 12/17/12).

Interpretations of Events in Light of Analytical Angles

Teachers shared beliefs and values that were at times opposite to what their peers were sharing in session 2 included the following: *it is never okay to say the n word*; *free speech is what this country is founded on;* and, *actions have consequences* (O2 – 12/12/12). These examples demonstrate the continued fundamental value conflict that was present in session 1 and strengthened in session 2: Do I as a teacher have the freedom of speech in an educational community when the speech hurts? When faculty left session 1, teachers felt sorry for each other and were deeply moved. After session 2, this conflict was relived and became clearer and sharper due to the format that allowed everybody to speak individually and comment on session 1. When the conversation was unrestricted at the end of session 2, the same pattern from session 1 recurred. However, during session 2, the conflict became more personal. Overall, perhaps encouraged by the

format of the activity, an actual conversation about the nature of the slur induced hurt or the claim of freedom did not take place.

This faculty tension seemed to have become a negative growth of conflict rather than an acute sense of reflection. The behavioral indicators for session 2 were *sharing personal experience about slurs on campus directed towards students* and *sharing personal experience about slurs directed towards self, on or off campus*. Teachers did share personal experiences and beliefs, yet given the intensity of the adult conflict, it was not surprising that the students fell out of the gaze.

Reflecting on my knowledge base and theory of action, I recognized there was tremendous personalization and affirmation of absolute moral stances: *never okay to use the n word* and *we have freedom of speech in this country* (O2 – 12/12/12). The absolutes remained irreconcilable and deeply personalized. In attempting to create a *safe space* for conversation, I gave the teachers an opportunity to express themselves without being interrupted so that they could express themselves and listen to each other. However, instead of creating a *safer space and reducing fear and defensiveness*, as had been the goal for session 2, the prompts and the format refueled the conflict from session 1 rather than diffuse it. The first part of the multi-pronged prompt was a part of the original plan: *What is a slur and why are they hurtful? What was a time a slur was used towards you and what happened?* But, the third part was added as a reflective piece to session 1: *What is social justice and how do I model that with my actions as an educator here at LHS?* The participants took up the first two parts of the prompts since they directly fed the conflict from session 1. Not surprisingly, looked at in hindsight, the third, rather elusive part of the prompt was essentially ignored. The deeply personal conflict around *freedom of speech* versus *sensitivity how speech can hurt* fueled the emotionality of the session, but this conflict was never worked on in session 2. These two factions remained stuck in mutual moral recrimination. Yet, one teacher (AA-NA-F) informed me that she invited the teacher using the *n word* during session 1 (W-F) to her house for *dinner* that *weekend* (SC – 12/12/12). This invitation was the only clear example of a teacher breaking through session 1 and 2 opposing sides to engage in a conversation.

Reflection on My Leadership Role in Hindsight

The intention for session 2 was to *develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization*. This did not occur. The multi-pronged and open prompt diffused the intention. Secondly, although acutely aware of my position of authority as principal, I decided to facilitate session 2. My project had sparked the faculty tensions and my Team shied away from this conflict. Thirdly, reflecting on my theory of action, I was concerned about where I could go from session 2 into a place of *deep conversation* as there were no *courageous conversations*, only stating and restating of one's moral high ground.

Reviewing my knowledge base, I analyzed my leadership role with the following two concepts: school administrator and transformational leader. During my project, I never stopped being the principal of this school. As the principal, I was continuously on call and responsive to details that required keen focus and long term planning such as raising student achievement through our benchmark data process to immediate crisis response such as school lock downs. I continued my regularly assigned duties to evaluate my teachers' performance, design other professional developments, and attend to daily

campus situations. Yet, I also needed to be a transformational leader for this project and not just a principal.

A transformational leader is someone who engages the school community in deep and meaningful conversations and *constructive problem talk*; by engaging in *constructive problem talk*, teachers are better able to make changes that benefit their students rather than avoid talking or blame and invite defensive reactions (Robinson et. al., 2009). Yet, I was not prepared for the deep conflict that a transformational leader needs to countenance. I had conducted research on transformational leadership and theoretically understood the change process by did not apply this information to my practice.

I chose to aim for a school wide policy with next steps regarding slurs rather than continue on the planned trajectory. That is, I opted to solve the conflict administratively rather than conversationally. As evidenced by session 2, my facilitation did not enable the faculty to pierce through the conflict from session 1 and engage in a real conversation with one another. I as the school leader and project leader realized that we were not able to successfully facilitate and go beyond conflict. A *safer zone* seemed to be aiming at a policy that once and for all could create clarity, yet false clarity as it turned out.
It seemed that the original design for sessions 1 and 2 did not work. I hoped that by altering the design into creating a school wide policy, I would allow the faculty to set specific norms regarding language. By incorporating faculty into the communication policy process, I hoped faculty would come together to solve future problems as a school rather than create further conflict. I did not know how to engage the faculty in a perspective change to discuss the real problem: slurs are used on our campus daily. In session 3, I began a significant design change in order to bring some core objectives from my project to fruition.

Session 3: Acknowledge Depth of Problem and Deepen Insight

Description of Session

Session 3 is the beginning of the design project change. The Team elected to move towards a policy instead of continuing with the conflict that had occurred in sessions 1 and 2. This session 3 took place during the second semester. Sessions 1 and 2 took place during the first semester of school. All teachers were present during session 3. The facilitator, a staff member (MA-F), reviewed the current communication norms with the group that the administrative team had created at the beginning of the school year: *probe for clarification, put ideas forward, pay attention to self and others, and presume positive intentions*. The facilitator informed the teachers and staff that we would be reviewing the draft communication norms that the Team had created post session 2. The draft norms included language from the employee handbook, an anti-slur policy statement, and tips on how to respond to slurs in the classroom (Appendix U). Each teacher had in front of them a copy of the draft communication norms for review. The policy document was also emailed to teachers prior to session 3. The facilitator asked the group to take a few minutes to review the proposed norms before conversation began. Then, the facilitator opened up for a non-structured conversation regarding the norms. The entire group, like in sessions 1 and 2, was sitting around tables in a circle-like setting.

A teacher (W-M) started the conversation by asking a similar question from

session 2 and spontaneous conversations post session 2: *Are certain words banned on this campus…why are we having this conversation?* (O3 – 2/12/13). The facilitator calmly reminded the group that *conversations we are having have come out of the anti-bullying week-long advisory activities that started at the beginning of the school year…*she reminded teachers that *this conversation came out of what students heard in the classroom*…she continued with the *Team, student leadership council, Gay Straight Alliance, and principal created the opinion survey about slurs in the classroom and on campus. Then, we as a staff began to talk about what slurs we may hear in the classroom and how we as adults could potentially intervene when hearing slurs…the Team does not want to ban books* (O3 – 2/12/13). A teacher (W-F) asked, *Can I use certain words or slurs in my classroom within the context of my lesson, like w-b-s* [wetbacks]…*I still don't know if I can do that?* (O3 – 2/12/13). A teacher (W-M) shared, *Am I allowed to teach Huckleberry Finn or other texts that may contain inappropriate language?* O3 – 2/12/13). The facilitator shared that she was taking notes so she could take it back to the Team for review and create a final communications policy. Another teacher (PA-F) shared that she *appreciated the specific ways in which to respond to slurs* that were in the draft norms (O3 – 2/12/13). Teachers continued to review the draft communication norms in *a routine manner* evidenced by the manner in which the group was reviewing the draft like any typical non-courageous conversation professional development we had engaged in numerous times before SHU:SH began (O3 – 2/12/13). Many teachers stayed silent as they read and reviewed the norms. Session 3 was a shorter session as other items were discussed at this same professional development. The norms were the first agenda item for the professional development.

Overall, the teachers expressed that the norms were too broad and did not address specific questions teachers had. But overall, there was not much conversation regarding the draft norms. There seemed to be a lack of interest evidenced by teachers not asking questions nor adding to the existing conversation. It was hard to determine if this was from typical teacher fatigue during a professional development session at the end of the school day or a challenge to engaging in *courageous conversations*. The facilitator closed the conversation regarding the draft communication norms and shared that teachers could still email or inform the Team by the end of the week of changed they wanted to see in the norms. The facilitator then continued on to other aspects of the professional development agenda.

Report on Data Collected Between Sessions

Some spontaneous conversations addressed the continued tensions teachers felt regarding the formal professional development sessions. One teacher (AA-F) came into my office and shared, *Did you know that some middle school students are asking why the high school is so racist?* (SC – 2/18/13). She also shared with me that certain [white] *teachers were being extra nice* to her on campus but *walking on the other side of the hallway* from her and asking her about her day and *complimenting me on my clothing* (SC – 2/18/13). Another teacher (AA-MA-F) shared with me that some teachers were *volunteering to participate in an after-school project* she was running where *there was no interest before*…she mentioned it seemed like *fake interest* (SC – 2/19/13). This teacher said that she thought that because [white] teachers were showing volunteer interest in the after-school program she coordinated that somehow their non-willingness *to speak up in*

the meetings regarding the *n word* would lessen the racial tensions on campus (SC – 2/19/13). These examples are reported to demonstrate that teachers in spontaneous conversations were continuing to feel the racial tension outside of the sessions amongst the adults.

The Team discovered a number of reasons teachers offered as why slurs are heard by some teachers and not others. Even though the design changed for session 3, I decided to stick with the original interview questions in hopes of keeping this portion of the design intact. Teachers seemed eager to share their responses outside of the formal professional development. Teachers shared a variety of reasons as to why they thought slurs existed on campus such as the following: some teachers actively ignoring them, some just not hearing them, or hearing them and accepting them as appropriate student-to-student language. One teacher stated that teachers *actively ignore* (INT – 2/17/13) slurs, while another stated that teachers ignore slurs because *they think they can't do anything* (INT – 2/17/13), and yet another teacher said that teachers *just don't hear them* [slurs] (INT – 2/18/13).

Teachers discussed factors that contributed to the slur issue in our classrooms and on campus. One teacher stated, *I mean, it takes a lot of work. To be explicit about something takes an everyday practice* (INT – 2/15/13). A teacher explained in a follow-up interview, *when it does come up in the class [slurs] even students will say ooooo, you know, as a reaction, because it is normalized that slurs aren't used, but in the beginning when I was getting to know the students and create that relationship, and we were getting used to what was acceptable and what was not* (INT – 2/14/13). Another teacher shared with me in a spontaneous conversation that she just wanted *there to be peace on campus* (SC – 2/15/13).

Report on Discussions in Team

After session 3, the Team met. We discussed how the faculty seemed to be *over it* in terms of engaging in any topic of depth (LTC – 2/15/13). We shared how we thought a baseline policy of what was appropriate and what was inappropriate to allow on campus would be a starting place for us to regroup as a faculty. The discussion of the Team, like typical discussions, was somewhat reactive with minimal reflection. One Team member stated that teachers seemed to be going in to opposite direction with their *fixation on Huck Finn and censorship* (LT – 2/15/13). The Team continued to have an overall sense of moral outrage of the *n word* conflict. In fact, this moral outrage became an impeding factor in attempting to analyze the situation appropriately. As the principal and researcher, it was difficult to redirect the Team to a place of analysis and specific reflection due to the Team also being intertwined with the conflict. The Team was beginning to give up hope with the project and faith in the ability of the faculty to address the *n word* conflict or other design project related topics.

The Team discussed the need to create specific revisions for the final communication norms to address the teachers' specific questions and clarify school protocol. We attempted to create a policy that embodied *freedom of speech* with responsibilities for actions. The Team created communication norms and emailed the document to the teachers for their review and requested feedback via email to the Team. The Team created specific revisions for the final communication norms to address the teachers' specific questions and clarify school protocol: *LHS will not endorse censorship...adults*

will adjust vocabulary…the school has a zero tolerance policy for slurs…if heard the adult must stop the conversation and remind students of policy (FDOC – 2/15/13). The second draft of the communication norms became final as there was no further prompt for discussion or concern.

Reflection of Team in Action

The Team was grasping for ways to handle the conflict from sessions 1 and 2 and hoped that a policy could neutralize this conflict. Drafting a norms policy seemed a step in the direction to create a *safer place* for a conversation about slurs. By moving away from the *n word* conversation, the Team thought we could regain a starting place to restart a conversation about slurs through a much more structured process.

Decisions as to Next Steps in Action

Although the design project was now focused on policies and protocols rather than proceeding beyond the conflict from sessions 1 and 2, the spontaneous conversations and interviews outside of the formal professional development sessions proved to aid in the understanding of addressing slurs on campus and understanding the direction the conversations had taken us as a faculty.

The Team decided to adjust session 4 professional development session to engage in more team building activities to take a break from the conflict and engage in something less problematic. We decided to engage the faculty in a team building activity, as we needed to come together as a school before creating a *safe space* and participating in any further conversation. The Team was attempting to address the conflict from sessions 1 and 2 and defuse it.

The original focus of session 4 was engaging in an *inquiry cycle while creating action space*. Instead of *creating intervention strategies through real scenarios and role-playing* about slur intervention as originally designed, the Team decided to engage the faculty in an activity about themselves and how they could contribute to the school overall. Session 4 would be an attempt to engage teachers and staff in a self-reflection in identity to be followed by exploration of the slur issue in subsequent sessions.

Interpretations of Events in Light of Analytical Angles

Our original learning objective for session 3 was to have the faculty understand the multiple factors that contribute to faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs. This objective was not met within the context of the professional development. It seemed that SH:USH had become a two-tiered process: one, SHU:SH within the professional development sessions discussing communication norms and policies with adults; and, two, SHU:SH outside the professional development sessions in spontaneous conversations and interviews beginning to identify key issues of slurs on campus and why they existed. The formal setting was unsafe and the informal setting seemed safer for faculty.

Session 3 was the opposite of what the session was intended to do. Instead of being about looking at the *depth of the problem*, the facilitator introduced a set of simplified norms that were accepted without much comment. However, it attempted to resolve the questions some participants asked repeatedly about what was allowed on campus. Even though the facilitator wanted people to have a deeper conversation, the new proposed norms seemed to have preempted this happening.

According to my theory of action, if I were able to *reduce fear and defensiveness* amongst the faculty, the faculty would have been able to understand the multiple factors that contribute to the faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs. The learner must be actively involved in the process by sharing personal experiences. Session 1 jump-started the project with faculty sharing personal experiences and opinions immediately, and session 2 repeated this session in an unreflective manner. Instead of moving the conversation about conflict to a higher level, session 3 lacked *depth of understanding*. My theory of action was not necessary wrong; it is just that the issue of race unexpectedly changed the topic mid-session.

The discourse did not change in session 3. As I had hypothesized, a mix of actively ignoring, the pathology of silence, and helplessness occurred. There was no refinement, deeper understanding, shared understanding that no matter what, we as a faculty did not want to hurt people on campus including teachers of color tolerating the *n word* nor the LGBT students hearing slurs on a daily basis. The facilitator in session 3 had reminded the group that it was important that we as a faculty *engage in courageous conversations in a social justice school*. However, the faculty was not engaging in a conversation at all. Some white teachers used the *Huck Finn* argument to disregard the simplistic norms policy. The Team became helpless in breaking through the conflict and as a result had no answer in moving the faculty forward. The policy was a move that shut down the conversation as it symbolically promised to solve the problem, but everybody could see that it was not resolved. It seemed that no one wanted a repeat of sessions 1 and 2, and faculty simply wanted to get through session 3 without conflict.

Teachers were willing to discuss the difficult slurs outside of the professional development sessions, individually. The Team was unable to create a *safe space* for collective conversation. Some individuals felt safe talking one-on-one but fell into unsafe territory when entering the group setting. The policy solved nothing and left the conflict uncomfortably unexamined and festering. It was safer to remain in the safe zone of the policy and dispense with the conflict with a neutral document than to actually defuse the conflict.

There was a consistent, superficial idea of *courageous conversations* through sessions 1-3. Although LHS is a social justice themed school, the faculty seemed to purport the opposite of social justice in daily practice. At times, teachers, staff, and Team members hide behind this language to thwart further, deeper discussion or actual arriving at the heart of an issue.

Reflection on My Leadership Role in Hindsight

The central problem in the unfolding of the project is leadership. The Team was not able to channel the conflict into a learning opportunity for participants. The first session was centrally about all slurs not only LGBT slurs. The second session again focused on slurs and it became more personal with teachers criticizing the *n word* user. In both sessions 1 and 2, the faculty had entered into the depth of the slur problem: widely divergent experiences across race, genders, sexual orientations and classes with the experience of slurs hurting, mutual recrimination and a moral discourse of righteousness and shame. No psychological safety formed in the formal professional development collective space of the faculty. Considering the literature I read regarding *courageous conversations, cognitive dissonance, changing values and beliefs,* there was never a

courageous conversation, and I ended up scrambling to redeem not only my project but faculty relations overall.

I was having a difficult time organizing my own Team members to reflect appropriately and not get caught up in the intense turmoil that had started. I wanted the Team to view the conflict from a distance, but emotions were running high even within the Team meetings. I knew I needed a cohesive Team to continue the project, yet what I saw was the beginning of factions within the Team.

I decided not to attempt further to engage the teachers in a more meaningful analysis of the slur issue as teacher participation in session 3 was not only limited, but a good number of teachers were not talking at all. This was the opposite of what the design was supposed to do. Although teachers were excited about the prospect of discussing LGBT issues on campus, it became clear that this was not going to occur in the way I had planned. Creating the communication norms was a step away from *deepening insight* and confronting our norms, value, beliefs and sharing our true experiences.

Although our faculty had agreed upon the final communication norms, it distanced us from the slur problem. It became a pro forma process. As the researcher and school principal, I was concerned that the participants as a group were moving further away from each other and any conversation that would lead us to a school with a more positive climate for LGBT or any students. I was also concerned that the faculty was becoming more divided and less united as SHU:SH progressed. I desired to create an opportunity for the faculty to come together as the conflict was still unresolved. I predicted a more free-flowing unrelated activity would cause a neutral pause before beginning to repair the relationships that seemingly had been broken during the *n word* conflict.

Session 4: Team Building: Understanding Ourselves, Understanding Others

Description of Session

Session 4 was originally titled *Engage in Inquiry Cycle while Creating Action Space*. Team building was introduced into the design after analyzing the data from sessions 1-3 and attempting to bring the faculty together.

Two teachers were absent for session 4. I participated in the first half of the professional development with the teachers and participated as participant-observer for the second half and was not the facilitator. A teacher (W-F) facilitated session 4. The participants were sitting in a circle facing each other as they had in sessions 1-3. The facilitator explained that we were continuing the conversations about *equity and social justice* from session 1-3 as we were *a social justice school* (O4 – 2/20/13). She explained that we would be discussing *teacher identities and teacher communities* (O4 – 2/20/13). The facilitator prompted the group to create an individual I-story about one-page long using the following prompt: *How does equity and social justice relate to you at LHS?* She continued with giving three examples of I-stories some of her students had written. The facilitator asked us not to include our names but describe as much detail to the question as possible to the degree we felt comfortable. She then informed teachers and staff that after writing our I-stories she would collect them and redistribute them to the group to read to attempt to figure out who wrote which I-story.

The teachers began to write their I-stories answering the prompt. After one minute

of beginning to write, a teacher (W-F) asked, *How it is represented in our life? I am confused* (O4 – 2/20/13). The facilitator clarified by saying, *Yes, how does equity and social justice relate to your life and LHS?* (O4 – 2/20/13). Teachers continued to write their answers as it was quiet in the room and all teachers were participating in the writing activity. Once completed, the facilitator collected the I-stories and redistributed them in the circle. She gave us a couple of minutes to read the responses and then asked us if anyone would like to read the story they have. A teacher (MA-M) volunteered to read the story he had received.

The facilitator asked the group if anyone would like to guess which teacher's story he was reading. A teacher (AA-MA-F) guessed correctly on the first try. The facilitator then solicited another volunteer to read another person's story. A teacher (W-F) volunteered and read the story she had received and she guessed whom the person was and was incorrect. A teacher (W-M) jumped in and guessed another person and he, too, was incorrect. The facilitator then asked the person who owned the I-story to raise her or his hand. A teacher (MA-F) raised her hand. There were various sounds in the room like, *oooh, mmm, wow* evidencing that most of the participants did not know this woman's story (O4 – 2/20/13). The facilitator shared that this was a great example of how we as a team could grow together by hearing each other's stories. She then transitioned us to the second half of the professional development.

The facilitator informed us that we would now be working in teams to identify how we could build creative alliances with ourselves. She showed us the four posters in four different areas of the room: *action, feeling, structure, and meaning* and asked us as individuals to stand next to the poster that we felt we identified with the most as a teacher (O4 – 2/20/13). All teachers got up from the circle and gravitated towards which word they identified with the most as a teacher. Each group had about the same number of teachers in it. No one group had all teachers of the same race. The facilitator then read the following prompt and also distributed the prompt to each group in hard copy form:

> *As a group, discuss and record: the strengths of this quality in the classroom/school community; how it can support other qualities in being more effective in the classroom/school community; what support it needs from other qualities to be more effective in the classroom/school community. As a group, create a movement, chant, skit, rap, song, poem or tableau to demonstrate your findings. As you discuss and brainstorm your presentation, keep in mind equity of participation* (O4 – 2/20/13).

All groups jumped in and began answering the prompt. The room was *lively* and energetic evidenced by the *amount of conversation, laughter, and engagement in each group* (O4 – 2/20/13). The facilitator walked around the room checking in with each group. Then, after 15 minutes, she gave the group a five-minute warning to conclude their project. Each group presented their ideas and followed the prompt and directions. Teachers concentrated as they engaged in a collaborative approach with their groups to complete the prompt (O4 – 2/20/13).

The most significant portion of the professional development was the final debriefing activity as this reflective phase allowed teachers to associate freely with personal responses. The facilitator brought the group back to the circle as we had begun session 4 and informed us it was time to reflect on these two activities. She started the informal group conversation with the following prompt: *How did you feel during today's*

activities? A teacher (MA-F) stated, *this was a good community building activity…I have been here a year and realized that I still don't know people* (O4 – 2/20/13). Another teacher (MA-M) shared, *I found myself asking how open should I be? How vulnerable should I be?* (O4 – 2/20/13). The facilitator responded with, *this is a tiny way of breaking down these barriers between us and getting naked in front of each other* (O4 – 2/20/13). A teacher (PA-F) said, *the conversations I heard today were like a reflection of how our students feel when they are in class* (O4 – 2/20/13). A teacher (W-F) stated, *there are people here who are making big sacrifices to be here* [teaching at this school] (O4 – 2/20/13). A teacher (AA-F) shared, *I found myself holding back for a fear of being judged* (O4 – 2/20/13). A teacher (W-M) shared, *I liked the activities today* (O4 – 2/20/13). Another teacher (W-M) said, *if he likes it, it must be great* (O4 – 2/20/13). There was some laughter in the room (O4 – 2/20/13). The facilitator closed with thanking us for engaging in the professional development and encouraged us to take the I-story activity back to our classrooms as well as continue the teacher connections we had made in session 4. There was a sense of community in the room evidenced by teachers continuing conversation after the session ended and using terminology such that was used in the session such as *structure, meaning, feeling, action*, in the conversations (O4 – 2/20/13).

Report on Discussions in Team

The Team was unable to meet after session 4 and before session 5. However, in a spontaneous conversation post session 4, two Team members informed me that they wanted to *drop out of the project* all together. One member shared with me that she was *just over it* (SC – 2/20/12). Another shared that she was disappointed in the *lack of integrity* some teachers brought to the conversations especially at a social justice school (SC – 2/21/12). Yet, both members decided to finish the project.

Interpretations of Events in Light of Analytical Angles

The original objective for session 4 was to *engage in an inquiry cycle while creating action space* around slurs. What the Team decided to employ instead was a team-building identity activity to reconnect the teachers and staff with one another through the first three sessions. The faculty engaged in a set of activities that apparently seemed to have made people feel good. Teachers apparently had an easier time discussing relatively harmless personal stories than discussing slurs directly. We were back in the territory of polite, safe, and low-stakes communication and story swapping.

I chose to engage the participants in a team building activity even though it was not directly related to my design. It is not clear what it may have contributed to my design purpose, but by all indication it did neither harm the purpose nor move it forward.

Reflection on My Leadership Role in Hindsight

As the research and participant-observer in my design project, I was feeling a bit defeated about the trajectory the professional development sessions had taken. I knew that *creating a safe space* where teachers could share their thoughts and feelings regarding identity was critical for session 4. I knew this because session 3 had held little interaction and conversation amongst the teachers and in session 4 teachers shared emotional content regarding them. Even though the responses from the teachers in

session 4 were not directly related to slur abatement, the faculty interactions were about identity through team building.

Session 5: Reflection

Description of Session

Session 5, like session 4, is not a part of the design. The original title of Session 5 was *Efficacy*. In session 5, I attempted to bring the faculty together to reflect on sessions 1-4 and complete the project. In addition, my hope was to have a *safer space* for reflection after engaging in team building in session 4 and provide an opportunity for debriefing. This debriefing was more of a symbolic close to the project rather than debriefing that would rekindle the unresolved conflict.

Two teachers and staff were absent for session 5. The participants sat in a circle facing each other as they did in sessions 1-4. Session 5 was shorter than anticipated due to other agenda items that were timely and needed to be addressed on the same day. During session 5, the teacher facilitator (PA-F) asked teachers and staff the following prompts: *What do we think of the conversation we have been having as a school community? How can we as a school community continue our anti-bullying and anti-slur efforts we started in these four sessions*? *What have you learned during this process?* The room was quiet and the participants were attentive evidenced by teachers watching the facilitator. There was a long pause before anyone started to share. Then, a teacher started the conversation. One teacher (W-F) shared, *I think about language differently now* (O5 – 2/27/13). A teacher (AA-MA-F) shared, *I think continuous conversations in a respectful, in a non-accusatory way is important…but also, people taking it seriously, I think is important* (O5 – 2/27/13). The responses were brief and teachers did not respond to others' comments but rather stated only what they had to say. There was no conversation. A teacher (W-M) said, *I am glad we have the norms now…they seem to have brought clarity to the situation* (O5 – 2/27/13). Another teacher (W-F) shared, *it was good that we were starting out with doing the bullying movie* (O5 – 2/27/13). Responses were short and seemingly very polite as evidenced by no one reacting in an extreme manner.

Then, the same teacher (W-M) who spoke earlier in session 5 shared, *slurs still don't happen in my classroom because I don't allow them* (O5 – 2/27/13). A teacher (AA-MA-F) stated immediately after the previous comment, *I still hear words* [slurs] *in the hallway* (O5 – 2/27/13). There was a bit of tension in the room after this comment evidenced by an interruption in the flow and timing of previous shared comments. A teacher (PA-F) restarted the conversation with the following:

> *It gets tiring addressing slurs…I'm starting a new class, but it's in the second semester, so I'm not as fresh, as first semester, but I have to be just as patient. I have to trust in the process. I think that's the part that takes a lot of energy, for teachers, for educators…I do think it makes a difference, even if we can't see it right then and there* (O5 – 2/27/13).

A few teachers were nodding during this speaker's comments, a couple of teachers were writing on a piece of paper in front of them looking down. There was another long pause before the next person spoke. A new-to-staff teacher (MA-F) shared, *I don't know what the previous conversations were because I wasn't here, but it's so important to remember where our students are coming from and how much they go*

through every day just to get to our classrooms…they are great kids and we really need to stick up for them (O5 – 2/27/13).[14] There was another pause in the room. The facilitator asked if anyone else would like to share thoughts and reflections on our conversations together. There were no further comments or responses and the facilitator continued on to the next agenda item.

Reflection on My Leadership Role in Hindsight

There was not a way to engage in session 5 as I had planned as originally planned. The teachers were obviously not at a point at which any specific intervention strategies would not have felt contrived.

The intention of session 5 was to engage teachers and staff in a simple reflection process about sessions 1-4. I had hoped to have faculty share ideas of ways our school community could continue anti-bullying efforts on campus. What occurred during session 5 was an extremely slim version of this. Teachers shared short statements without engaging in extreme language or content. Some responses included a student and anti-bullying focus, yet most responses remained on the surface. No new strategies or activities were suggested. No new motivation was evident.

In hindsight, I am not sure why I conducted session 5. It was a no-win situation. If I had cancelled session 5, I may have signaled that I was surrendering or that I thought the problems were beyond repair. Perhaps in holding the session, I was sending the right message of completing the project and keeping its integrity. It seems to me now that I was groping for some way to find out from the teachers how to proceed with our initiatives. But they balked. Not surprising, given the prompt. If the prompt had been meant to be reflective, it could have described sessions 1, 2, and 3 and asked teachers to analyze the shortcomings of their effort in a meta-critical way. But neither the Team nor the faculty was willing to go there again. Instead, the so-called debriefing became a symbolic activity in which all substantive content had to be avoided. Two teachers tried to prick briefly the consensus of silence only to show that nothing had changed and little had been learned. The last appeal *let's stick up for kids* was the final relief from this awkward activity.

Design Process Data Summary

The deep racial conflict that arose in session 1 and the inability of the Team to address it in a manner that brought the faculty together to learn from the experience deeply affected my design project. In this section, I summarize sessions 1-5 and share the design process data conclusion.

Session 1 was centrally about slurs, in general, including LGBT slurs. Session 2 was again focused on slurs. In session 2, the focus of the professional development became more personal with teachers expressing disgust for the use of the *n word.* In both sessions 1 and 2, I entered the depth of the slur problem. This entry included vastly different experiences based on race, reaction to use of slurs, and continued disgust and shaming of the *n word* user.

The Team failed to address the conflict that occurred in session 1 and reoccurred in session 2 to effectively bring the faculty together. Session 3 is where the design began

[14] Queer, Mexican-American, female

to change. In session 3, the proposed norms and communication policy thwarted the conflict and disallowed the faculty to learn from the experience. The Team decided to engage the faculty in a team building exercise in session 4 in hopes to bring the faculty together after such turmoil and silence. Finally, session 5 revealed that the realization that slurs hurt and needed to be addressed was safely encased in pathological silence again.

Design Impact and Process Data Conclusion

I collected baseline and impact data to measure effectiveness of my design. These data were the slur tally and the student slur survey. In between these pre- and post-impact data sources, the Team engaged the teachers and faculty in a five-session professional development series designed to create a safer school culture where teachers intervene more frequently when they hear slurs on campus. The impact data suggest that there was no progress on teachers intervening when slurs are heard on campus. An overall improvement in slur occurrence is indicated in the post-SHU:SH survey and slur tally, but it may not be due to the slur intervention focus of my design. It is possible that teachers may have talked with students about LGBT issues on campus in the context of the anti-bullying campaign without making slurs the focus since the teachers may have felt insecure about the slur issue as noted in the process data in the next section. SHU:SH may have created overall more awareness but not the direct change for students that could indicate a deep conversation and direct intervention to slurs on campus. In order to understand the impact data, I turn to the process data to explain.

Analyzing the process data made it clear to see why there was no progress. First, I was unable to follow through with the design process. The design changed dramatically at session 3. The Team was unable to recover the original design and therefore no intervention strategies were introduced and no efficacy was created. Second, if anything, the activities that did occur seemed to have scared participants into addressing slurs. The slur problem among adults using the *n word* festered and went unaddressed. Although session 2 was intended to address the *n word* conflict, it appeared to exacerbate the tension. This session 2 and tension perpetuated a fear of touching the *n word* conflict as well as discussing other slur problems that existed on our campus. Additionally, the culture of moral outrage seemed impossible to penetrate among the teachers and staff as well as the Team. Instead of analyzing and reflection in Team meetings, the distaste and distrust of our fellow teachers and staff fed the division. The simple communications policy did not solve the issue. Intended to neutralize the conflict and begin at a common base, the policy did the opposite and silenced participants into not wanting to address the *n word* conflict or seemingly any topic of conversation. Therefore, no new judgment regarding the appropriateness of slurs within the school context was developed. Teachers and staff continued to fall into two factions that largely divided along racial lines: advocating for *freedom of speech* using *Huck Finn* as the wedge issue and *never using the n word* with a stance of feeling sorry for the morally compromised. In this next section, I connect SHU:SH to other research and discuss potential next steps.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Homophobic slurs are common on many school campuses including LHS where I conducted this study (Kosciw et al., 2009). However, teachers and staff are typically categorized into a group of people known for a willingness to assist all students in need. SHU:SH was developed initially to help teachers and staff intervene when they heard slurs on campus. In this study, I attempted to investigate one high school's faculty effort to engage in SHU:SH. As Chapter 4 illuminated, there are a number of factors that accounted for the blockage of conversations. In this chapter, I highlight one of these factors: leadership.

Creating a sustainable school culture change is challenging. In the original design, I envisioned some of this challenge, but I had imagined that our Team and faculty would move from recognizing the slur problem, through understandings how slurs hurt, to a disposition of wanting to learn how to improve the situation. What happened instead is the design made visible a racially identified division among faculty that caught everybody off-guard given our espoused ideology of social justice. So, from the very beginning we were thrown into the depth of a racial conflict. It was extremely difficult for the Team to navigate the faculty to a place where they could engage in a meaningful conversation about this racial conflict.

In this section, I reconnect with my theory of action through the complex ecology of this design development work and suggest future design improvements. I first discuss the change dynamic of moral leadership to move a school forward towards positive change. Second, I explore the local context of silence. Finally, I conclude with my thoughts on the core practice that still needs changing: slurs.

Change Dynamic: Moral Leadership

There are several change dynamics necessary to move a school forward. One of the most important change dynamics for a school is moral leadership. A transformative leader is somebody who addresses and engages teachers and staff in moral dialogue to surface inequities (Shields, 2004). Educational leaders have a unique role in shaping the moral culture of an organization. Organizational cultures are created and formed by leaders who spell out a vision and make decisions in the moment. These decisions, more than anything else, reveal leaders' underlying values and commitments, especially when leaders need to mediate between conflicting goals, interests, and risk discomfort. Within moral leadership there are three characteristics I identify and connect to SHU:SH: courage, engaging in constructive problem talk, and self-critical inquiry. In this next section, I discuss several prototypical activities that should be reexamined for the next design iteration.

Courage

First, courage is needed to employ effective moral leadership. The researcher who is also the principal should be aware of avoidance traps when conflicts may occur. In future designs, the researcher should address the conflict head on rather than shying away from it. Lack of courage is exactly what Abrams (2009) included in his list of 18 reasons why educational leaders avoid courageous conversations. The researcher/principal must be honest with herself in acknowledging that these classic avoidance techniques exist and

impede the necessary courage to conduct a successful project. Next design steps also include the researcher examining the types of prompts to be used within the professional development sessions. A courageous conversation in which participants reach out to each other without ignoring the hurt and conflict experienced at the time may benefit from a more direct prompt. If conflict does arise, the design can include the following prompt: *What was the conflict all about in Session X?* This may allow participants to get a deeper understanding of how much slurs can hurt. Participants need to face their conflict and move past it onto a higher plane of mutual understanding without condemning one side or the other. A prompt such as the following can assist future participants to focus on the suffering or any hurt caused by a word or group of people without targeting a specific person: *What do we need to do to make everybody comfortable in our group and enable the conversation we need to have about slurs on our campus?* This type of prompt may be able to continue a difficult conversation after tension arises. Next, I turn to constructive problem talk to offer further design changes for the next iteration.

Constructive Problem Talk

Further design changes can be seen through the lens of constructive problem talk. This second characteristic of moral leadership is actually not moral per se. It has to do with communication skills. In the next design, effective moral leaders should engage in constructive problem talk with their teachers. By doing so, faculty may avoid problem talk, entering a culture of blame, and inviting defensive reactions from their peers in future designs. A well-situated researcher in a moral leadership stance can facilitate constructive problem talk (Robinson et. al., 2009). To engage in effective constructive problem talk for future designs, the design should allow further faculty communication through better professional development facilitation. Teachers need to have an opportunity to engage in constructive problem talk and given the opportunity to verbalize their individual positions and engage in whatever conflict may arise. Finally, the researcher must approach the project as a researcher and not as a participant. In doing so, the researcher can remind herself of the pathologies, conflicts, and traps that involve the discussion of racial and homophobic content. Next, I turn to self-critical inquiry for additional prototypical activities for future designs.

Self-critical Inquiry

Self-critical inquiry can improve the design challenge. This third change dynamic within moral leadership revolves around the disposition to reflect deeply on people's motives and to continuously relate them to the theory of action that guides the leaders' strategies (City et. al, 2009). First, the researcher needs to observe keenly behaviors and beliefs and discuss and understand why teachers and staff act as they do before suggesting alternatives (City et. al, 2009). Second, the next design iteration needs to safeguard against seemingly easy solutions. Simple actions such as administrative legislation should be avoided as any tendencies to jump to conclusions and impose action may silence self-critical inquiry. The researcher also needs to take time to understand teachers' actions to interpret what is actually occurring. Finally, the researcher should caution against morale outrage of any shared norms being violated and instead turn to careful analysis. In this next section, I analyze the local context of silence to offer future design improvements.

Local Context: Silence

Through the local context of silence, I offer several design changes for the next iteration. The researcher must be aware of the importance of dialogue in theory as well as practice and avoid the silence of equity traps (McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004). Future designs should focus on the common group goal of creating a climate in which all participants are free from hurt caused by these traps. Attempts should be made to allow the various teacher factions that may surface to be heard. Furthermore, the design should include acknowledgement around potential hurt and faculty divisions. Additionally, I suggest an external critical friend to assist the researcher in building capacity. Many educational leaders lack capacity to successfully address LGBT issues in schools (Warwick et al., 2004). By having an external critical friend, the researcher may better break the silence within herself and her Team.

Finally, silence itself should be reexamined and analyzed more carefully in the next design phase. First, the salient role of race and the politics of silence is something to further engage in the next study. Within this context, the researcher should include an awareness of hurt potentially increasing within the study instead of decreasing. Next, the researcher must take note and understand the multiple versions of silence that may appear: ensure the slur conversation continues instead of the Team or participants thwarting it; observe teachers who are silent or who have stopped talking through the project and examine why; and be aware of freedom of speech and moral outrage claims in the name of social justice as it may be silencing the real issue of slurs.

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This study illuminates the difficulty of employing effective moral leadership and engaging teachers and staff in difficult topics of conversation through professional development. As the literature suggests, it is difficult for teachers to achieve positive change through professional development regarding equity even when they desire true change (Sleeter, 1992). I have focused on teaching lessons on leadership for the next design iteration. To conclude, I return to the core practice that needs changing: slurs.

Researcher's Final Thoughts: The Core Practice That Needs Changing: Slurs

The education system in general is resistant to change (Biegel, 2010). SHU:SH is an example of a study that aligns with previous research on reculturing and school change. Culture is challenging to change because it is a property of groups and the accumulated learning that a given group has acquired during its history (Schein, 1988). Reculturing is influencing norms, values, and underlying assumptions that are subconscious and institutionally reinforced. Because these assumptions are underlying and subconscious, change is a very arduous process. Can reculturing for equity be successful? If there is one insight that I would privilege it is that the unpredictability of difficult, volatile, and complex human interactions around social status requires enormously capable leaders (Theoharis, 2007).

Slurs still exist at the school where I was principal and many teachers are still not intervening when they hear these slurs. Even though the Team struggled in many aspects of moral leadership, this should not discourage educational leaders to bring these issues to the table. The next design iteration should put in the center self-critical inquiry for

social justice leaders, examine the local context of silence, and analyze the effective implementation of theory to practice within social justice initiatives.

Because of my study, I now have an expanded capacity for conflict when addressing social justice issues and a well-rounded sense of the complexity of this study. Although a challenging endeavor, I am still committed to making the world a better place through social change in education perhaps now more than ever.

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Appendix A: Slur Tally

SLUR	TALLY
FAGGOT	
BITCH	
GAY	
NIGGA	

Appendix B: Student Slur Survey

Directions:
Please choose one answer for each question. Please do not leave any answer blank.

Definitions:

- LGBT = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
- Anti-LGBT slur = any word or phrase involving LGBT identities used in a negative or inappropriate way. For example, these are anti-LGBT slurs: *fag, faggot, that's so gay, no homo, dyke, lesbo*

1. Grade: 9 10 11 12

2. Gender: female male transgender

3. How often do you hear anti-LGBT slurs directed at students?
Always Often Sometimes Never

4. If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind, how often do teachers, staff, or other adults on campus step in and try to stop the slur or talk to the student?
Always Often Sometimes Never

5. If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind, how often do students step in?
Always Often Sometimes Never

6. Have you ever talked to a teacher or staff member about anti-LGBT slurs?
Always Often Sometimes Never

Appendix C: Session 1 Observation Protocol

Behavioral indicators	*Session 1*
<u>*Cognitive dissonance*</u> Questioning if data is true - I am not sure that the students understood the survey - I do not think you collected the data correctly - I do not think these slurs are as prevalent as you suggest <u>*Awareness*</u> Surprise - this is terrible - I am shocked Acknowledging data is true - I had no idea that this was happening at our school - This is not surprising as I hear these slurs frequently - Thank you for sharing this with us - We need to do something about this Sharing personal experience of hearing anti-LGBT slurs on campus - last week I heard a student say X in my classroom, I told him it was inappropriate - I always address these inappropriate words when I hear them	Learning objective: Teachers name the problem and are motivated to pursue the issue of slurs further. Date: Time: Participants: Absences: Observed behavior *(to be completed during session 1)*

Appendix D: Session 2 Observation Protocol

Behavioral indicators	*Session 2*
Sharing personal experience about slurs on or off campus – self Sharing personal experience about slurs on campus – students Stating that as a social justice school we need to address this issue Teachers asking how we as a school can address slurs as it is our responsibility	Learning objective: Teachers assume personal responsibility for tolerance of slurs. Date: Time: Participants: Absences: Observed behavior *(to be completed during session 2)*

Appendix E: Session 3 Observation Protocol

Behavioral indicators:	*Session 3*
Sharing past slur experience directed at student Sharing past slur experience directed at self (adult) Discussing reasons why faculty has not addressed problem in the past (overwhelmed, not trained on how to respond, so pervasive that now slurs are ignored) Sharing insight at session 3 closing with I never thought that…I learned that…a new perspective I have is…	Learning objective: Faculty will understand the multiple factors that contribute to faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs Date: Time: Participants: Absences: Observed behavior *(to be completed during session 3)*

Appendix F: Session 4 Observation Protocol

Behavioral indicators:	*Session 4*
Volunteer strategies for slur intervention Participate in role-play for slur intervention Express appreciation that they now have action steps to intervening Create two to three strategies to intervene when teachers and staff hear slur by end of session 4	Learning objective: Develop, simulate, and understand effectiveness of various intervention strategies. Date: Time: Participants: Absences: Observed behavior *(to be completed during session 4)*

Appendix G: Session 5 Observation Protocol

Behavioral indicators:	*Session 5*
Volunteer to continue efforts outside of sessions Express ways in which sessions could have been run more effectively Express ways in which sessions ran smoothly and addressed issues Express continuation of slur intervention strategies after sessions	Learning objective: Develop facility and efficacy in intervening strategies through reflection and fine-tuning Date: Time: Participants: Absences: Observed behavior *(to be completed during session 5)*

Appendix H: Session 1 Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Post-session 1 questions:

1. How do you make sense of the data presented today in session 1?

2. Do you think this school has a problem with slurs, why or why not?

3. What do you think the problem is?

4. How do you describe this problem?

5. What does this data have to do with the adults here on campus?

6. Should teachers and staff worry about slurs, why or why not?

7. Do slurs hurt? Why or why not?

8. What do you think would help you intervene when you hear a slur?

9. How would you improve the professional development sessions?

Appendix I: Session 2 Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Post-session 2 questions:

1. What is a slur and why are they hurtful?

2. What slurs have you heard since session 1 in your classroom or in the hallways?

3. Have you had any personal experience with hearing slurs directed towards you on or off campus?

4. What do you think would help you intervene when you hear a slur?

5. How would you improve the professional development sessions?

Appendix J: Session 3 Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Post-session 3 questions:

1. What are some of the slurs you have heard on campus since session 2?

2. Why do you think this problem has not been addressed before?

3. Has this problem been addressed before and the results were unsuccessful?

4. What factors contribute to teachers ignoring or tolerating slurs?

5. How did we get ourselves into this situation?

6. What do you think would help you intervene when you hear a slur?

7. How would you improve the professional development sessions?

Appendix K: Session 4 Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Post-session 4 questions:

1. What are some of the ways in which our students have suggested you intervene when you hear anti-LGBT slurs?

2. Have you used these strategies in the past?

3. What have been the outcomes?

4. What strategies do you think would work in the classroom or in the hallways?

5. What do you think would help you intervene when you hear a slur?

6. How would you improve the professional development sessions?

Appendix L: Session 5 Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Post-session 5 questions:

1. What slurs did you hear between sessions 4 and 5?

2. What intervention strategy did you employ if any?

3. Did it work? Why or why not?

4. If you were to intervene again, what would you try differently?

5. How can our school continue the efforts we have started in these five professional development sessions regarding slurs?

6. What do you think would help you intervene when you hear a slur?

Appendix M: Spontaneous Conversation Protocol

When you as the Team engage individually with teachers regarding the professional development sessions, please answer these questions:

1. What does the teacher share with you?
2. Is it a personal experience from the classroom?
3. Is it a personal experience outside of the classroom or school?
4. Does the teacher share information regarding the professional development sessions specifically?
5. Does the teacher discuss her or his own behavior in the classroom related to the professional development sessions?
6. Does the teacher discuss the behavior of students in regards to the professional development sessions?
7. Does the teacher discuss the behavior of other teachers in regards to the professional development sessions?

Appendix N: Lesson Plans Professional Development Sessions

Session 1 Lesson Plan

Learning objective:
Teachers name the problem and are motivated to pursue the issue of slurs further.

[Teachers and staff sitting in circle around one large table in a teacher's classroom]

(5 min.) Introduction:
At a previous staff council meeting, we discussed the importance of language use amongst adults and students on campus. Subsequently, our school participated in a week-long event of anti-bullying awareness and activities leading up to a school wide field trip to see the documentary, BULLY. As a social justice school, we are continuing this conversation of making sure our students are safe when they are in our classrooms and walking in our hallways.

(40 min.) Data sharing and discussion:
Facilitator (F) gives them piece of data: non-intervention slur tally. F gives teachers (Ts) time to look at it. Then prompt follows: how do you make sense of these data? Teachers allowed to talk freely about what they see. Ts allowed to share whatever comes to mind. Secondly, F shares the student survey regarding anti-LGBT slurs. How do you make sense of these data from the students? Ts allowed to talk freely about what they see. Ts allowed to share whatever comes to mind. My hope is to have Ts realize that our school has a problem with anti-LGBT slurs. Next, Ts discuss the following: what is that problem? How can we describe it? How do we define it? Ts allowed to talk freely and share whatever comes to mind. If needed, F to asks the question, what do these data have to do with us as adults here on campus? Next, F asks why should we even worry about slurs? F prompts if necessary, slurs hurt, and why do they hurt?

<u>Homework:</u>

- Listen for slurs on campus and create mental or physical list to bring back to session 2
- Recall a time when you experienced receiving a slur and what transpired during that circumstance

Session 2 Lesson Plan

Learning objective:
Teachers assume personal responsibility for tolerance of slurs.

[Teachers and staff sitting in circle around one large table in a teacher's classroom]

(5 min.) Introduction: During session 1, we shared the shocking statistics of high frequency of anti-LGBT slurs on campus from our Team's perspective as well as the students' perspective through the survey. From there, we dove into the questions What is a slur and why are they hurtful? We generated a thoughtful and engaging conversation around power analysis, historical context of slurs, and why they are hurtful. Today, we are going to continue this conversation by sharing what slurs we heard on campus between sessions 1 and 2, and share our own personal experience with slurs.

(5 min.) Norms: As we move into discussing slurs, we will be using language that normally we do not use. Within the context of this meeting, we must acknowledge that it is okay to say the words we have heard from our students or other adults whether on or off campus.

(35 min.) Data sharing and discussion: What slurs have you heard on campus since session 1? F allows teachers to talk freely and openly. Then, F asks what personal experience have we had receiving a slur on or off campus? F continues to allow teachers to talk freely and openly.

<u>Homework:</u>

- Continue to listen for slurs and create mental or physical list to bring back to session 3

Session 3 Lesson Plan

Learning objective:
Faculty will understand the multiple factors that contribute to faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs.

[Teachers and staff sitting in circle around one large table in a teacher's classroom]

(5 min.) Introduction: Today you have brought back yet another list of slurs that you have heard between session 2 and 3.

(40 min.) Data sharing and discussion: F asks what are some of the slurs we have heard on campus since session 2? F allows free and open conversation. Then, F asks questions, why do you think this problem has not been addressed before? Has this problem been addressed before and the results were unsuccessful? If necessary, F will continue with prompts, what factors contribute to teachers ignoring or tolerating slurs? How did we get ourselves into this situation?

<u>Homework:</u>

- Ask Advisory students how they would like to see teachers and staff intervene when they hear an anti-LGBT slur
- Continue to take mental note of slurs on campus
- Brainstorm strategies for intervening when hearing slurs

Session 4 Lesson Plan Learning objective: Develop, simulate, and understand effectiveness of various intervention strategies.
[Teachers and staff sitting in circle around one large table in a teacher's classroom] (5 min.) Introduction: Your homework for today was to ask your Advisory students how they would like to see or hear teachers and staff intervene when they hear any anti-LGBT slur, create a mental list of slurs heard on campus, and brainstorm strategies for intervening when hearing slurs. (40 min.) Data sharing and discussion: F asks the following prompts, what are some of the ways in which our students have suggested we intervene when we hear anti-LGBT slurs? How any of us used these strategies in the past? What have been the outcomes? F asks, what strategies do we think would work in the classroom or in the hallways? What does this look like in reality (role-play)? F asks if necessary, how about another intervention strategy role-play? Are these role-play examples realistic? <u>Homework:</u> - Listen for slurs and create mental or physical list to bring back to session 5 - Try one of the slur invention strategies and share experience with session 5

Session 5 Lesson Plan Learning objective: Develop facility and efficacy in intervening strategies through reflection and fine-tuning
[Teachers and staff sitting in circle around one large table in a teacher's classroom] (5 min.) Introduction: F will review homework from session 4 - bringing a list of slurs to session 5 and attempting to use one of the slur intervention strategies (40 min.) Data sharing and discussion: F will use the following prompts for initiative discussion: what slurs did you hear between session 4 and 5? What intervention strategy did you employ? Did it work? Why or why not in your opinion? F will continue with the following prompts if necessary: if you were to intervene again, what would you try differently? How can we continue the efforts we have started in these five sessions? <u>Homework:</u> - Continue intervening when slurs are heard using strategies discusses in session 1-5 - Work with new committee, group to continue anti-slur efforts

Appendix O: Timeline

PROJECTED DATE	DESIGN IMPACT DATA	DESIGN USE DATA	ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS DATA
11.15.12	Complete IRB process		
11.15.12	Pre-SHU:SH anti-LGBT slurs tally		
11.15.12	Pre-SHU:SH student survey		
12.05.12		SHU:SH Session 1	Team conversations, teacher/staff interview, spontaneous conversations
12.12.12		SHU:SH Session 2	Team conversations, teacher/staff interview, spontaneous conversations
12.17.12	Winter Break	Preliminary Data Analysis PD Sessions 1-2	Revise Sessions 3-5
02.12.13		SHU:SH Session 3	Team conversations, teacher/staff interview, spontaneous conversations
02.20.13		SHU:SH Session 4	Team conversations, teacher/staff interview, spontaneous conversations
02.27.13		SHU:SH Session 5	Team conversations, teacher/staff interview, spontaneous conversations
04.01.13	Post-SHU:SH slur tally survey Post-SHU:SH student slur survey		
04.08.13	Data Analysis		
0.15.13	Findings and conclusions - write-up dissertation		
05.19.13	Walk stage		
06.01.13	Submit dissertation to committee		
06.15.13	Make revisions		
08.16.13	Final sign off to dissertation		
Fall 2013	Filing fee and graduate		

Appendix P: Codes for Analyzing Descriptive Behaviors

CD1: Cognitive Dissonance (expressing discomfort, questioning data)

AW1: Awareness (silence, sharing personal experience, acknowledging data is true)

SC2: Safe space for conversation, reduce defensiveness (sharing personal experience about slurs on or off campus – self, sharing personal experience about slurs on campus – students)

CR2: Creating responsibility (stating that as a social justice school we need to address this issue, teachers asking how we as a school can address slurs as it is our responsibility)

AP3: Acknowledge depth of problem (sharing past slur experience directed at student, sharing past slur experience directed at self adult)

DI3: Deepening insight (discussing reasons why faculty has not addressed problem in the past, overwhelmed, not trained on how to respond, so pervasive that now slurs are ignored, sharing insight at session 3 closing with I never thought that…I learned that…a new perspective I have is…

IC4: Engage in inquiry cycle (volunteer strategies for slur intervention, participate in role-play for slur intervention

AC4: Creating action space (express appreciation that they now have action steps to intervening, create two to three strategies to intervene when teachers and staff hear slur by end of session 4, creating goals and next steps

EF5: Efficacy (volunteer to continue efforts outside of sessions, express ways in which sessions could have been run more effectively, express ways in which sessions ran smoothly and addressed issues, express continuation of slur intervention strategies after sessions)

Confusion

Norms

Appendix Q: Final LHS Communication Norms

Language Norms: Discussion Among Adult Colleagues

Consistent with the school's mission and its strict prohibition against harassment of any kind, there is a presumption at LHS that the use of slurs is never appropriate. However, the school takes a common sense approach to this issue and recognizes that there may be rare circumstances under which an adult within the community may legitimately use a word which might otherwise considered to be a slur when it is clear, given the particular context, that the use of the word was not intended to harass, intimidate, or otherwise discriminate against anyone in the audience. Even under these circumstances, however, it is the school's expectation that the speaker will be mindful of any discomfort caused by the use of potentially offending language and, when made aware of any such discomfort, will adjust his or her vocabulary accordingly. Depending on the particular circumstances at hand, an example of when an adult's use of a slur may be appropriate is while conveying a factual account of an exchange between students who used inappropriate language. Another potential example is an adult conversation at the school aimed at developing a policy or protocol regarding language use at the school by students and faculty.

Language Norms: In an Instructional Setting

With respect to the use of slurs in an instructional setting, the school will not endorse a policy of censorship that bans the teaching of any material that might be deemed offensive by some member of the audience. However, if a teacher or administrator wishes to present material containing potentially offensive language, he or she must take care to introduce this material in a sensitive and thoughtful manner, providing instruction that will allow the students to understand the language within the relevant historical or sociological context. An example of this is the assignment of Huckleberry Finn in an English class. Regarding students' use of slurs with one another, the school has a zero tolerance policy. As such, if a teacher or administrator hears a student use a slur, even if he or she believes that the students are engaged in a consensual conversation, the adult most stop the conversation and remind the students of the school's policy. Repeated offenses must be referred to the Dean for appropriate disciplinary action. It is incumbent upon each individual within the LHS community to take personal responsibility for communicating directly with any other individual when he or she is offended by language use. If the individuals involved cannot resolve the matter between themselves, the issue shall be elevated to the Executive Director for resolution.

Appendix R: Main Activities

Session	*Main activities - PD sessions*	*Low inference behavioral indicators during PD sessions*	*Team activities*
Session 1 Create cognitive dissonance and awareness	Share anti-LGBT slur tally results (Appendix A) Share student anti-LGBT slur survey (Appendix B) Create knowledge – what is a slur? Examples, why are they hurtful, etc. <u>Homework:</u> Listen for slurs and create physical list to bring back to session 2	Learning objective: Teachers name the problem and are motivated to pursue the issue of slurs further. Behavioral indicators: *Cognitive dissonance* Questioning if data is true Silence - body language = arms crossed, rolling eyes, avoiding eye contact *Awareness* Surprise – this is terrible, I am shocked, body language = jaw open, wide eyes Acknowledging data is true Silence - body language = nodding head yes, Sharing personal experience of hearing anti-LGBT slurs on campus	Tally slurs of all kinds – not just anti-LGBT slurs
Session 2 Develop a safe space for conversation and reduce fear and defensiveness while creating responsibility and personalization	Review norms and safe space to discuss what we have heard on campus. Ask faculty what they heard between session 1 and 2 and why they think this is occurring Engage in conversation about personal experience with slurs among adults and own hurt Share how we as adults do	Learning objective: Teachers assume personal responsibility for tolerance of slurs. Behavioral indicators: Sharing personal experience about slurs on campus directed towards students Sharing personal experience about slurs directed towards themselves, on or off	Informally asking teachers and staff what they think of the first two sessions Find out: are there informal conversations ? What are people saying? What

	not like slurs yet we allow them at a social justice school <u>Homework:</u> Listen for slurs and create mental or physical list to bring back to session 3 Ask teachers and staff to brainstorm how teachers and staff could intervene when hearing slurs	campus	are people saying when Team members prompt conversations ?
Session 3 Acknowledge depth of problem and deepen insight	Create more specific communication norms Ask faculty what they heard between session 1 and 2 and why they think this is occurring Discuss with faculty why we have not addressed this problem before <u>Homework:</u> Ask Advisory students how they would like to see teachers and staff intervene when they hear an anti-LGBT slur	Learning objective: Faculty will understand the multiple factors that contribute to faculty ignoring or tolerating slurs. Behavioral indicators: Sharing past slur experience directed at student Sharing past slur experience directed at self (adult) Discussing reasons why faculty has not addressed problem in the past (overwhelmed, not trained on how to respond, so pervasive that now slurs are ignored) Faculty suggesting focusing on one slur or set of slurs to specifically target	Reporting back to Team about teachers and staff thoughts on sessions 1 and 2 Asking teachers between sessions 3 and 4 how and what they would like to see occur in sessions 4 and 5 Ask teachers: What will it take to have teachers and staff intervening when they hear slurs on campus? If you were to run these sessions, what would you include and why?
Session 4 Engage in inquiry	Ask faculty what they heard from their advisory students between session 3 and 4	Learning objective: Develop, simulate, and understand effectiveness	Reflect on sessions 1 – 4 and create

cycle while creating action space	Hypothesize how school can assist teachers and staff in intervening when they hear slurs Role-play potential interventions <u>Homework:</u> Listen for slurs and create physical list to bring back to session 5 Try one of the slur invention strategies and share experience with session 5	of various intervention strategies. Behavioral indicators: Volunteer strategies for slur intervention Participate in role-play for slur intervention Express appreciation that they now have action steps to intervening Create two to three strategies to intervene when teachers and staff hear slur by end of session 4	session 5 together with feedback from previous sessions Find out: ask teachers have the sessions been useful, why or why not? Do you feel you have heard more or fewer slurs over the past several weeks, why or why not?
Session 5 Efficacy	Reflect and report on what worked and what did not work in sessions 1-4 Discuss next steps to continuing anti-slur interventions <u>Homework:</u> Continue intervening when slurs are heard Work with new committee, group to continue anti-slur efforts	Learning objective: Develop facility and efficacy in intervening strategies through reflection and fine-tuning. Behavioral indicators: Volunteer to continue efforts outside of sessions Express ways in which sessions could have been run more effectively Express ways in which sessions ran smoothly and addressed issues Express continuation of slur intervention strategies after sessions	Continue working with people leading next steps on campus Find out: What is your biggest take away from this PD series for the teachers? What does it leave you asking? How would you have structured it differently?

Appendix S: Dissertation Data Quote Codes

O1: Session 1 Observation
O2: Session 2 Observation
O3: Session 3 Observation
O4: Session 4 Observation
O5: Session 5 Observation
LTC: Team Conversation
SC: Spontaneous Conversation
INT: Interview
DDOC: Draft LHS Communication Norms
FDOC: Final LHS Communication Norms

Appendix T: Recruitment Script

We, as a faculty, are currently involved in a school-wide anti-bullying effort. I as your principal am writing my dissertation about this process. During the next five professional development sessions and in between, the Team for this professional development project consisting of teachers, staff, and me the principal. We will also deepen our inquiry by engaging with you in one-on-one conversations. I intend to use data from these conversations for my dissertation. I welcome your participation in these inquiry activities, but in no way expect you to participate in them if you do not feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and insights with your colleagues and your principal.

Teachers and staff interested in volunteering to participate in the research outside of the professional development sessions 1-5 may inform members of the Team of desired participation in the interviews and follow up conversations. This interest can be communicated via email or verbal conversation with teachers in the Team.

Appendix U: Draft Communication Norms

Respecting Our Diverse Learning High School Community

Learning High School Norms

1) Pause before speaking.
2) Paraphrase to maintain intentions and meaning.
3) Probe for clarification.
4) Put forward ideas.
5) Pay attention self and others.
6) Presume positive intentions.

Learning High School Anti-slur Policy

Learning High School is committed to providing a safe and civil working environment. In order to fulfill its mission, it is essential that all LHS employees are able to work in an environment that is safe and free from slurs. Students and adults in both schools and offices should treat all persons equally and respectfully and refrain from the willful or negligent use of slurs against any person on the basis or race, language spoken, color, sex, religion, handicap, national origin, immigration status, age, sexual orientation, or political belief.

It is our policy that all community members must take a common sense approach regarding the use of language and recognize the importance of being mindful when speaking with students and other adults. When discussing slurs, it is important to use an initial abbreviated approach such as “n” word or “b” word to respect norms and values of a school setting.

There may be circumstances under which a word that might otherwise be considered a slur be used in a non-slur context. If a teacher desires to teach a lesson, book, etc., that contains a word(s) that may be considered a slur, the teacher must first submit the lesson plan or unit to the principal and meet with the principal to discuss proposed lesson.

Employee Handbook Review

p.1
Mission: Learning High School prepares urban secondary students to succeed in college or on chosen career paths, to live fulfilling, self-directed lives, and to be effective in creating a just and humane world.

p.7
Definition of Harassment

Harassment includes verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working environment or that unreasonably interferes with job performance. Harassment may also include unwelcome offensive racial or ethnic slurs, jokes, or similar conduct.

p.8
Employees are expected to act in a positive and professional manner and to contribute to a productive work environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity.

Responding to Slurs in the Classroom

When you hear a slur:

1. Breathe
2. Inform the student that you heard a slur or inappropriate word/phrase.
3. Talk about how it made you feel. You don't have to be a member of the group attacked by the slur to be offended.
4. Give a recommendation for action. For example, ask them not to use that word or phrase again.

When someone challenges you:

1. Breathe.
2. Check your pride. Try not to be defensive.
3. Use active listening. When someone is talking about how something you said made him or her feel, don't interrupt him or her.
4. Thank them for respecting you enough to be truthful with you.
5. Think, and then take appropriate action. Appropriate action may be nothing other than trying to take that word or phrase of out of your language. It may also be apologizing.
6. Thank them again later. This is a hard step to take, but it can be important for relationship and ally building. Thanking someone later for challenging you shows him or her you are interested in changing your own behavior on a deep level.